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1984

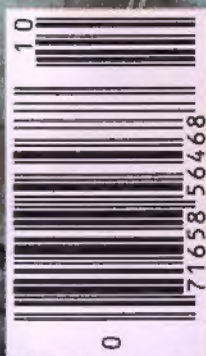
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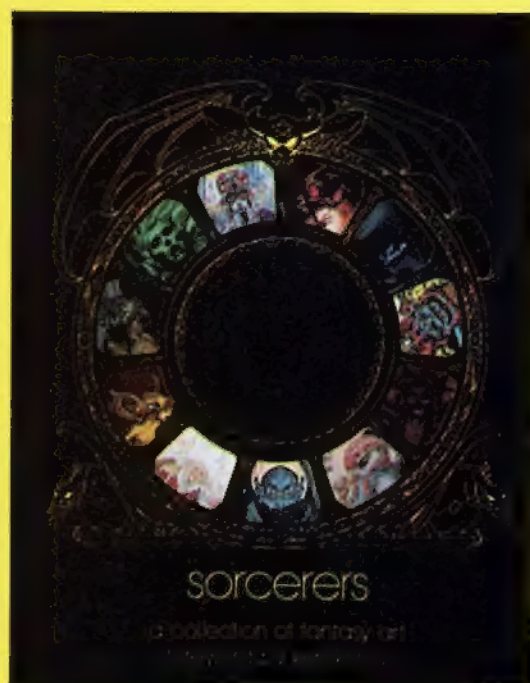
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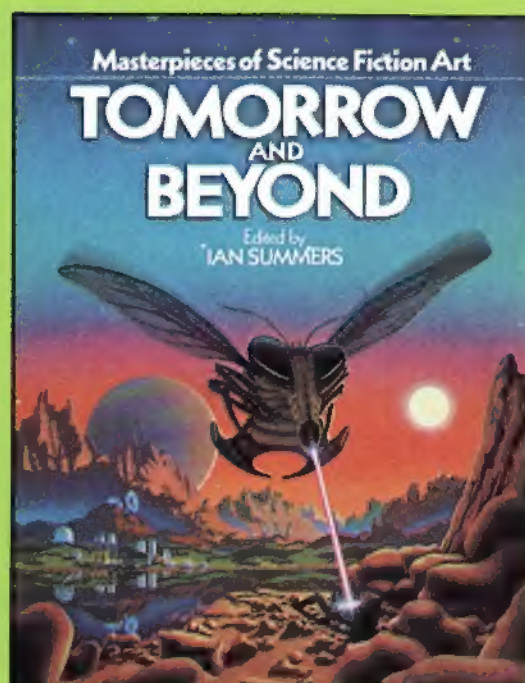
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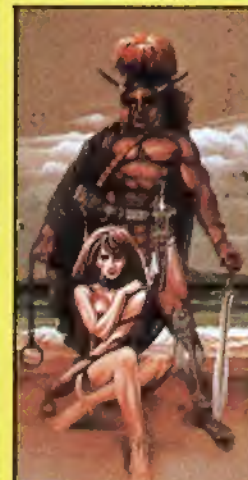
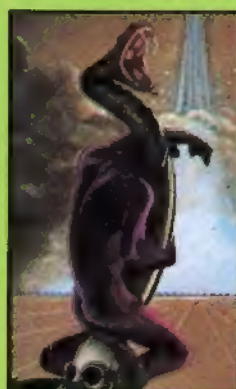
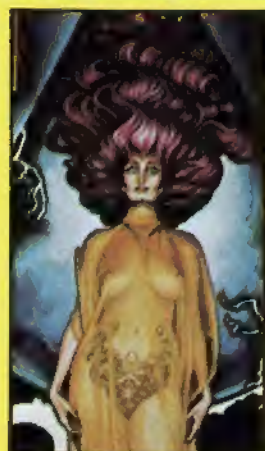
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1984

MAGAZINE

NUMBER NINE

OCTOBER 1979

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W.B. DuBAY
Editor

CHRIS ADAMES
Assistant Editor

Cartoon Factory
Art Production

SUZIN STARK
Advertising Production

MICHAEL SCHNEIDER
Circulation Director

PATRICK WOODROFFE
Cover Illustrator

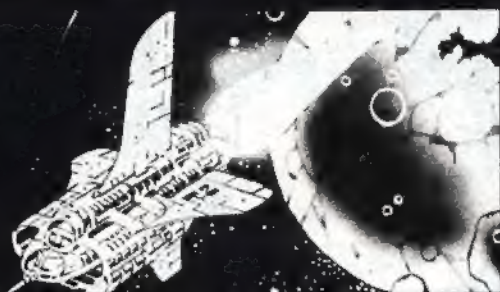
Authors
GERRY BOUDREAU
KEVIN DUANE
BILL DuBAY
JIM STENSTRUM

Illustrators
HERB ARNOLD
JOSE GONZALEZ
JESS JODLOMAN
ABEL LAXAMANA
ALEX NINO
FRANK SPRINGER

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BREAK EVEN 6

Between the orbits of Mars and Jupiter, there ought to be a planet. Basic astronomy had that figured out centuries ago. Why then has it never been discovered? Might be that it is an itty-bitty gnat of a world!



HERMA 24

They found the Viking princess frozen within a solid wall of ice. They never expected her to be alive. But when her cold, seemingly-lifeless body began to stir, it gripped the world in passions never before known!



CLEAR DANGER 34

They called him, simply, The Navigator, for he charted the forbidden byways of time itself. His mission: to save an oppressed society and prevent a dictator, a madman, a false messiah from ever being born!



STARFIRE 43

Becker skulked in the shadows, waiting. When at last the boy appeared and began to disrobe, Becker watched with silent revulsion as the nude form was revealed. It was true. The boy was not at all what he claimed!



REX HAVOC 51

Japan! The Island Empire! Land of the Rising Sun. Home of kabuki dancers, small cars, very complicated cameras with lots of expensive attachments, and more sliming, groatie monsters than you can shake a stick at!



The SCHMOO 74

A dying man's screams echoes off the walls of the mile-high city. A man plunges to his death as his wife watches. It is the final sound she will ever hear, and a thoughtless, irreverent way to say goodbye!

incoming telemetry



WHERE, OH WHERE HAS BIG REX GONE?

I just picked up the eighth issue of 1984 and could not be more upset. Again, my favorite series was conspicuously missing from the magazine's pages.

Where, oh where has **Rex Havoc** gone? We have not seen him nor the **Asskickers of the Fantastic** since issue #6. Please don't tell me his series has been cancelled in favor of the far more titillating adventures of **Frank Thorne's Ghita**. As much as I like **Ghita** and **Thorne's** storytelling, it is not an adequate substitute for **Rex**.

Can't we please have a heaping portion of both? **Ghita** and **Rex**? Do away with the other stories if need be. But please don't take away my series!

JULIUS CROUSE
Modesto, Calif.

Rex is with us again this issue, **Julius**. Unfortunately, you'll find that **Frank Thorne's Ghita** is conspicuously missing. While, ideally we would like to present as many series per issue as possible (we're not dummies... we know what you're hooked on!) we have found that artistic quality is compromised considerably by artists forced to meet rigid publishing deadlines. We have allowed our artists to set their own pace, instructing them to insure quality first and consider deadlines second.

Hence, when deadlines roll around, we will not always have a **Rex Havoc** or **Ghita** adventure prepared for the issue. However, you can be assured that we will have the best possible art and stories to see print.

1984: JUST ANOTHER PRETTY FACE?

There is a slick-papered, color-crammed purported science fiction magazine being published across town that is a pile of piping hot pterodactyl shit compared to 1984.

That other magazine may appear superficially slick, but what good is a pretty face when it masks an empty mind? Fortunately, 1984 has the intelligence, and when you come right down to it, its face, while not as pretty as the hooker's across the way, is still awfully pleasing to gaze upon.

RICHARD FRANCIS
Arbus, Md.



MUTANT WORLD GONE FOREVER?

Oh no! I just picked up 1984 #8, and have read, to my dismay, what you are leading me to believe is the final installment of **Richard Corben's Mutant World** series.

While it isn't stated anywhere that this is indeed the final chapter, the last page of the story is more like an epitaph than anything I've read since last visiting **Wildwood Cemetery**.

Please tell me it isn't so. **Dimento** will be back. Won't he?

RANDALL JENKINS
Randall, Ariz.

Rich's Mutant World series was originally scheduled to run six episodes, **Randall**. With some minor arm twisting we were able to persuade **Rich** to extend the saga of **Dimento** an additional two chapters, thus ending the series in 1984 #8.

Dimento, **Mutant World** and **Rich's** art have been so popular with the readers, however, that **Rich** just might be convinced that a second series would do wonders for his career. He says otherwise. But who knows what the future holds?

In the meantime, we hope you will enjoy the new color series which begins this issue. It is the **Starfire Saga**, the tale of a family's exploits within the vast frontiers of space.

A LEXICOGRAPHERS PARADISE IN 1984

I think 1984 sucks.

By now you must be used to hearing such lowbrow comments from your readers; moreover, editor **Bill DuBay** must be on quite a few more shit lists than just **Gloria Steinam's**.

The letters printed in your most recent issue rate as some of the most ignorant and reprehensible ever published anywhere. It brings to mind the stir that was caused by **Michael Oliveri's** letter in **CREEPY** magazine a few years back, wherein **Archie Goodwin** vilified **Oliveri** for his use of profanity.

Certainly lexicographers could write a dictionary of profanity with the words that are used so cavalierly in the **Warren** magazines now. But I won't go into a song and dance about that, or the needless violence or the inexcusable sexism. No one with half their colloid tissue is going to swill these inane tales of tomorrow as viable visions of the future.

I must say, however, that almost every letter criticizing the magazine, did so honestly and accurately. The only faults I could find with some of the jibes, and this is purely arbitrary, is that there was a surfeit of insults aimed at editor **DuBay**. No matter how much a person deserves it, you just can't go name-calling and write meaningful criticism at the same time. No professional editor or author is going to listen to that kind of harangue from a reader. He'll disregard the whole shebang, and then what good are the intelligent things that were said?

As for 1984 itself; yes, **Richard Corben** still draws pretty pictures, and **Jan Strnad** (**Leander** and the **Fat Queen**, **Encounter at War**, remember those carefree underground days, **Jan**?) still has the most readable story in the issue.

The rest was... unspeakable.

Jeez, how I wish **Warren** would have published a science fiction magazine back when **J.R. Cochran** and **Billy Graham** were the editors. I'm sure we would have seen some sensitive, well-wrought fantasies instead of the crap you're purveying nowadays. Ah well...! Perhaps in some exceedingly more benevolent parallel world...!

DENNY DALEY
Chicago, Ill.

GHITA AND SONJA ONE AND THE SAME?

I enjoy 1984 magazine with its wild stories and "dirty" words for the simple reason that there isn't really anything else like it on the newsstands today. I'm not a person who can be easily offended by "sex, sin and rampant immorality."

Up until now, the only thing I could find not to my liking about 1984 was the story "I Wonder Who's Squeezing Her Now" in issue #5. It was not a bad story; it was simply in the wrong magazine.

Now, however, you have embarked upon the ultimate farce. How could you even consider presenting a no-talent hack like Frank Thorne in the company of such excellent artists as Richard Corben, Rudy Nebres, Alex Nino, Alfredo Alcalá and Wally Wood?

Conning readers into praising Thorne's artistic talents while he was illustrating the Red Sonja series, was the biggest coup Marvel Comics ever pulled off.

Within the pages of the Marvel magazines, I've read such ambiguous and ignorant comments that Thorne both created the Sonja character and designed her costume; neither of which are correct. Sonja is the creation of Robert E. Howard, from his popular Conan series. As for her costume, Esteban Maroto should personally protest, for it was he who actually created Sonja's bikini armor, and Thorne who blatantly stole it.

Obviously all this talk of Thorne being Sonja's creator has gone to his head, for his Ghita looks exactly like Sonja in slightly different dress.

I know it won't do any good for me to beg you not to publish more of Thorne's grade-z imitation garbage. Further, you'll no doubt receive an influx of letters proclaiming me the schmuck of the century. But believe me, I know whereof I speak. And a man who is right stands as a majority of one.

TIM HEWITT
Myrtle Beach, S.C.

Since Frank Thorne's Ghita series began in issue #7, Tim, we have received hundreds of letters praising both Frank's art and storywriting abilities. While it would be redundant (and boring as hell) to publish all of these lavish plaudits, we did feel that your letter should see print, for the simple fact alone that it was uniquely the only criticism Ghita and Frank have thus far received. We really wish we could please all of the people all of the time, Tim. We hope you will at least find some merit in the other offerings within 1984.



NOT ALL READERS POTHEADS, JUNKIES!

Believe it or not, there are those of us who are not perverts, potheads, alcoholics or drug addicts who do indeed read 1984.

There also seem to be those who fight for immorality in literature, such as T. Douglas, one of the more callous and ignorant of your readers, whose letter was published in a recent issue.

Mr. Douglas slanders those of us who oppose his narrow view that immorality has its place in print. He also indulges in some choice name-calling in the process.

If jackasses such as he think they have any more right to their opinions than those of us who neither use nor condone profanity, then they are indeed as ignorant as their letter writing makes them out to be.

In the past, anytime someone has written to 1984 objecting to its pornography, he is immediately shot down by some foul-mouthed mongoloid with a typewriter and a king-sized superiority complex.

I'm astute enough to realize that there are two sides to every opinion. Why then can't you publish a balance of letters in each issue for and against profanity, pornography and all else that 1984 embodies, espouses and holds sacred?

It's my opinion that a science fiction story should be based upon the human situation first, supplemented by scientific knowledge. The stories within 1984 are based upon sexuality supplemented by nudity and profanity. I prefer the former. This is simply my position and all the insults from the sewer-mouthed illiterates of the world will not change it.

HENRY WEBB
Clinton, Iowa

1984 MEAN SPIRITED?

You know what disturbs me the most about 1984? It's not the generally poor writing, the obscenity, nor the pornography, though each of these is a problem in its own right. It's the mean-spirited slant of the writing. Don't any of your writers believe that mankind has any worth whatsoever, or that some men are capable of high and noble emotions? Are all human beings essentially possessed by petty evil?

You claim that you dare to break new ground, to be realistic, to be daring. But all you've ended up doing, so far, is pandering to man's vices.

Let's have some balance; dare to be positive. Just once.

THE MAD MAPLE
Ontario, Canada

I just wanted to compliment Bill DuBay. He's doing great things for Jim Warren's magazines. I really enjoy his Rook series in EERIE magazine. And his stories in 1984 are always the most pleasing of the issue.

JOEL ADAMS
Shanghai, Neb.

DARWINIAN THEORY OF THE FUNNIES!

When you think about it, the emergence of machine set type within the stories in 1984 is a logical step, not only in the evolution of comics, but in the growth of your readers, as well.

The first comic books children usually see are Richie Rich, Casper the Friendly Ghost, or others within the Harvey line. They graduate from that into Superman, Marvel Comics, and as they get older, eventually discover the Warren titles sitting over there next to the "big people's books." By that time, they are about twelve to fourteen years old, with awareness of themselves and their bodies stirring within them for the first time. They may stay with the CREEPY, EERIE magazines for a year or so before looking for more adult, more stimulating reading. That's where 1984 comes in.

Within its pages, your readers can still cling to the comics of their childhood. But they are introduced to the literature that they will no doubt be seeking more of in years to come, and are slowly shown that type-set words can be as much fun, if not more interesting than funny book balloon lettering.

It's a nice little evolutionary process. Warren should be proud that he thought of it first.

JILL HAWKES
Claymore, Idaho


Send all letters to: 1984 MAGAZINE, WARREN PUBLISHING, 145 East 32nd Street, N.Y. N.Y., 10016

BREAK EVEN

Between the orbits of Mars and Jupiter, there **ought** to be a planet. Basic astronomy had that figured out **centuries** ago, and they had the **math** to prove it.

But since when does **nature** listen to **mathematicians**?

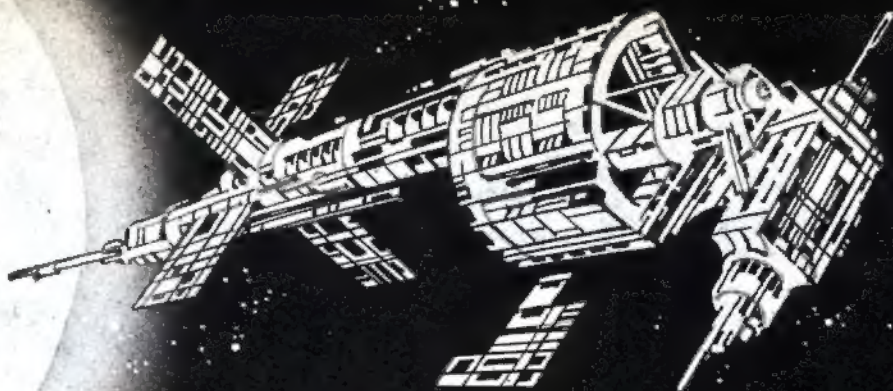
Instead, on the first day of the nineteenth century, they began to find the largest of several **billion** lumps of **rock**, **stone**, and ice now known as the **asteroids**. Within a **decade**, they found **four** more.



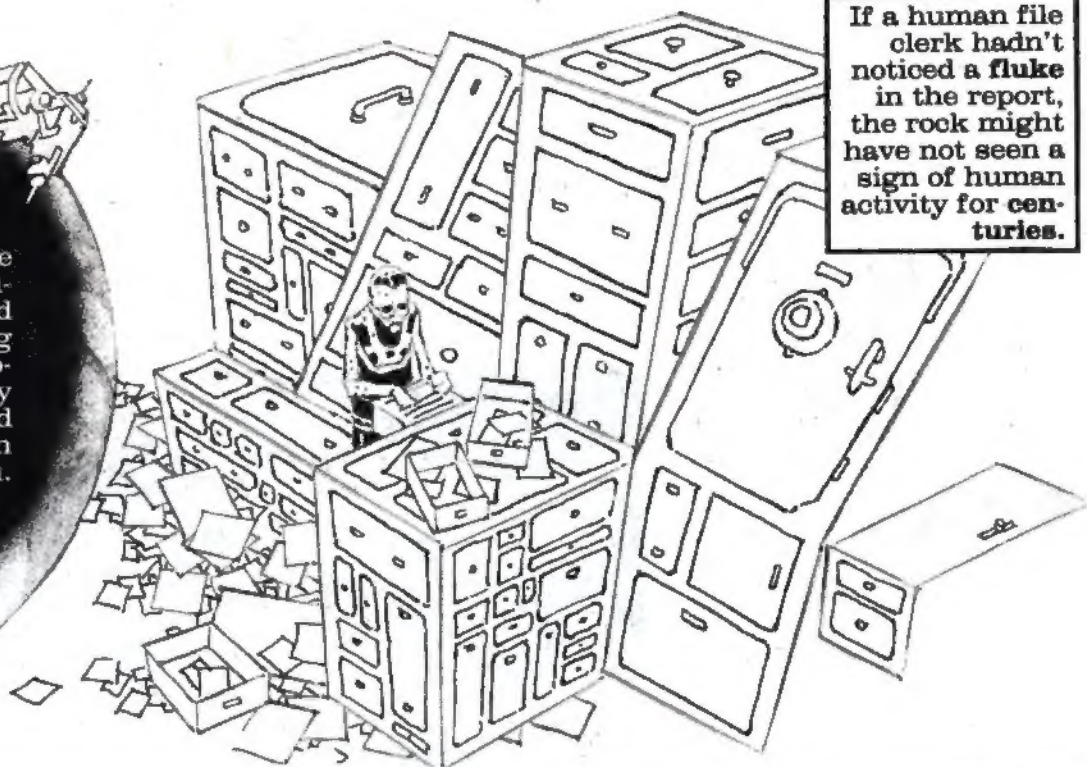
There are still many left to be found, two and a half centuries later, except **now** they are not just a piece of abstract astronomy, but a valuable source of **materials** and **supplies** for a developing space industry.



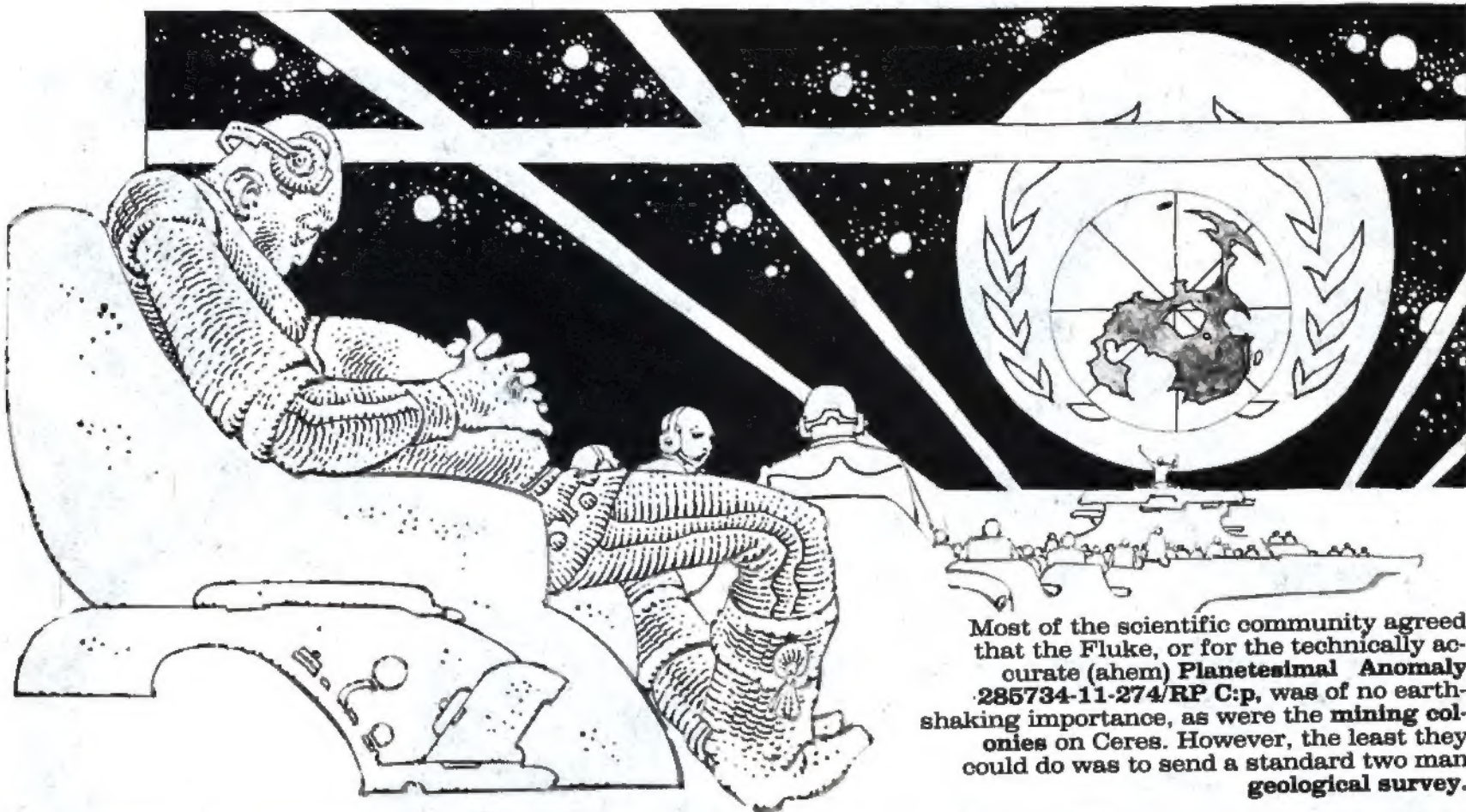
Most of the new discoveries are made by the wandering robot probes, which skip through the belt, charting the orbits for the Navigation Bureau, and scanning the bodies for valuable deposits of radioactives, metal ores, and water ice.



One particular probe came across one particular rock one day, and since it contained nothing to suit its preprogrammed tastes, merely reported its location and orbit to the Navigation Bureau.



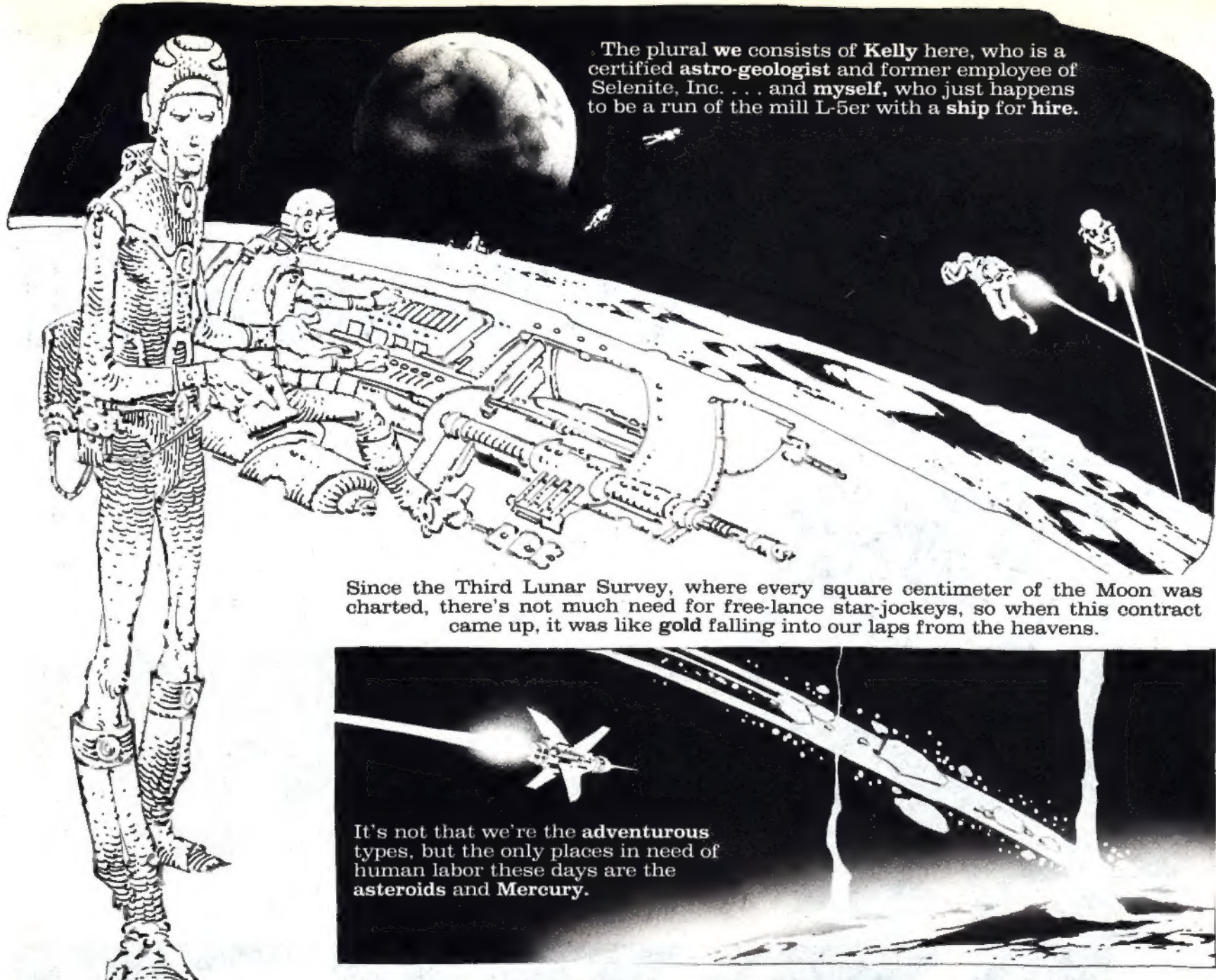
If a human file clerk hadn't noticed a fluke in the report, the rock might have not seen a sign of human activity for centuries.



Most of the scientific community agreed that the Fluke, or for the technically accurate (ahem) Planetesimal Anomaly 285734-11-274/RP C:p, was of no earth-shaking importance, as were the mining colonies on Ceres. However, the least they could do was to send a standard two man geological survey.




That's where we come in.




The plural **we** consists of **Kelly** here, who is a certified **astro-geologist** and former employee of Selenite, Inc. . . . and **myself**, who just happens to be a run of the mill L-5er with a **ship** for hire.


Since the Third Lunar Survey, where every square centimeter of the Moon was charted, there's not much need for free-lance star-jockeys, so when this contract came up, it was like **gold** falling into our laps from the heavens.



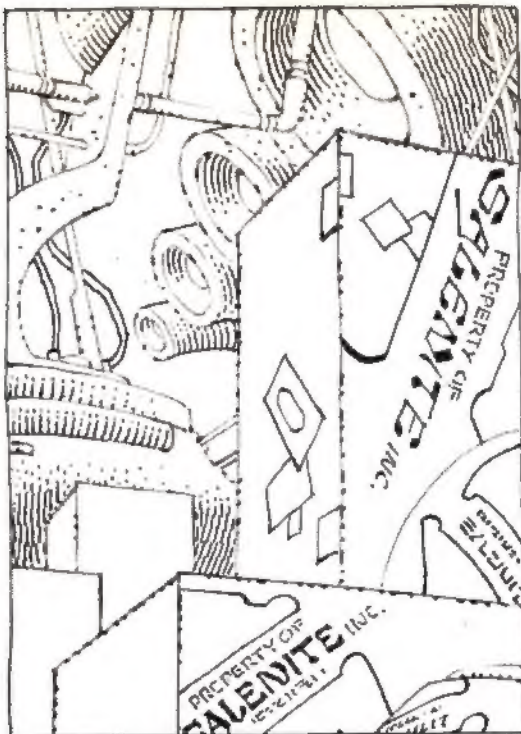
It's not that we're the **adventurous** types, but the only places in need of human labor these days are the **asteroids** and **Mercury**.



I don't **tan** well. We took the contract.



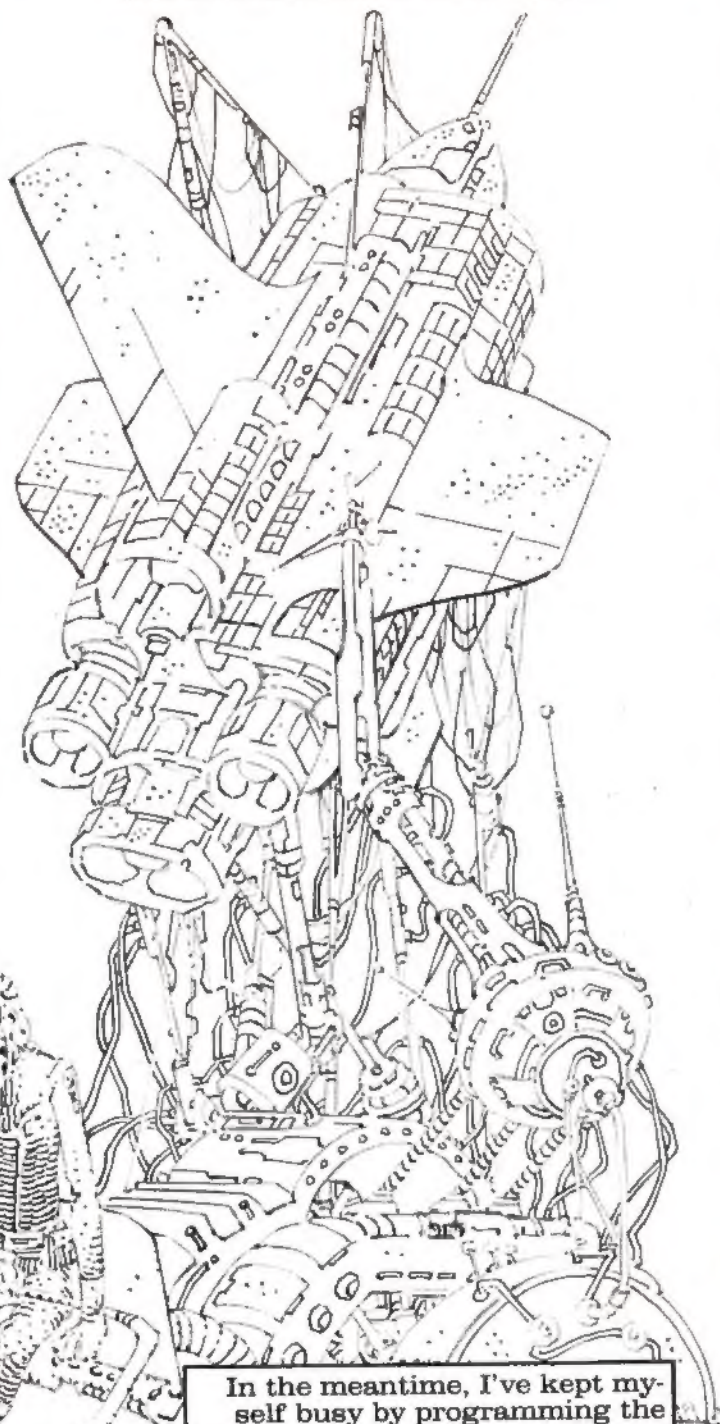
It took us **two weeks** to get to the Belt proper, and by then we were **used** to sharing the tiny lifepod with all the scanners, recorders, and what-not.



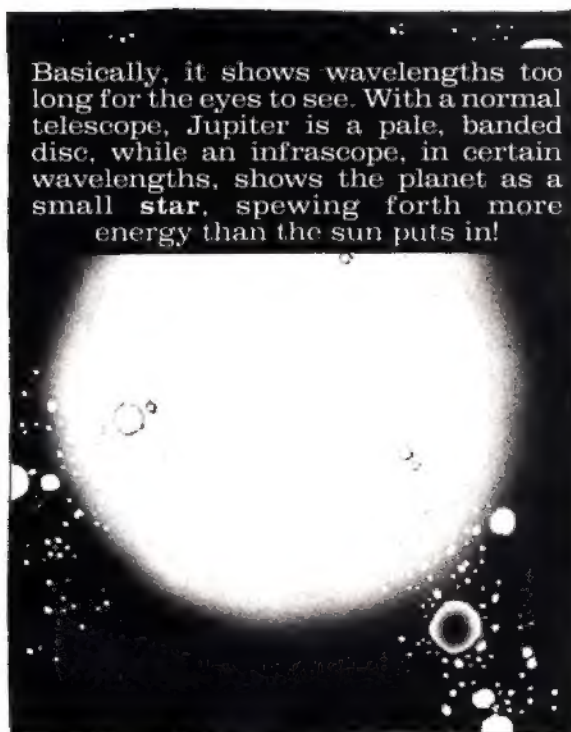
Kelly sometimes questions my morals, not always approving of my practice of "creative supply requisitioning."

But then again, how else could we underbid everyone for this contract? Besides, the guys on Luna will never miss the stuff.

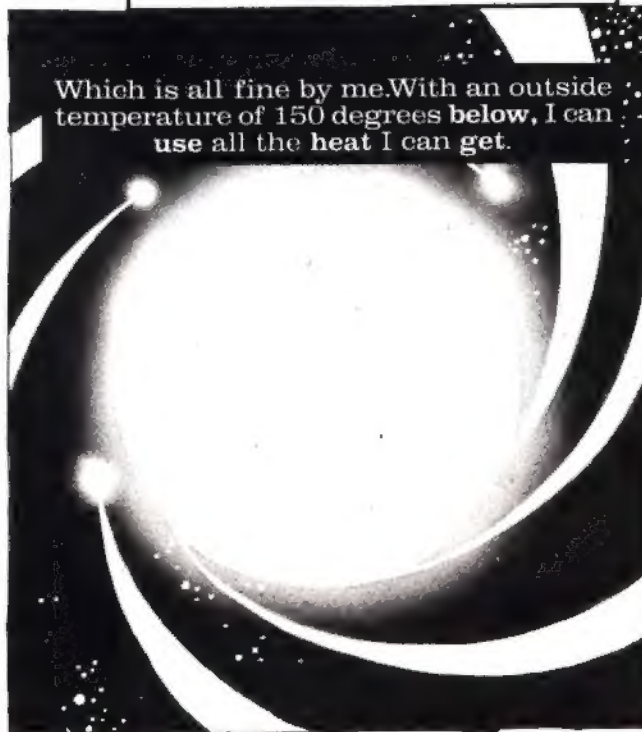
We did request two drones, though, and they were already at work on simple preventive maintenance like tightening screws and recharging a magnet or two. Simple, yes, but **necessary** to insure that we don't have to **walk home**.



In the meantime, I've kept myself busy by programming the drones to run the laser core sample drill, while I toy with the gear. One of my favorite pastimes is playing with the **infrascop**.



Basically, it shows wavelengths too long for the eyes to see. With a normal telescope, Jupiter is a pale, banded disc, while an infrascop, in certain wavelengths, shows the planet as a small **star**, spewing forth more energy than the sun puts in!



Which is all fine by me. With an outside temperature of 150 degrees below, I can use all the heat I can get.



On most of our trips, Kelly had been quiet. He's one of those people who never says much to begin with, unless you were talking shop.

But this trip Kelly was too quiet. Further, he seemed much more nervous than usual. First, he'd stare through the 'scope, then fiddle with his pocketbrain. Kelly was interested in something and that got me nervous.

And if your conversation didn't include stones, you'd swear you were talking to one. He's not really such a bad guy, just awfully quiet.

Deep space is supposed to be dull, but most of the interesting things are exciting.

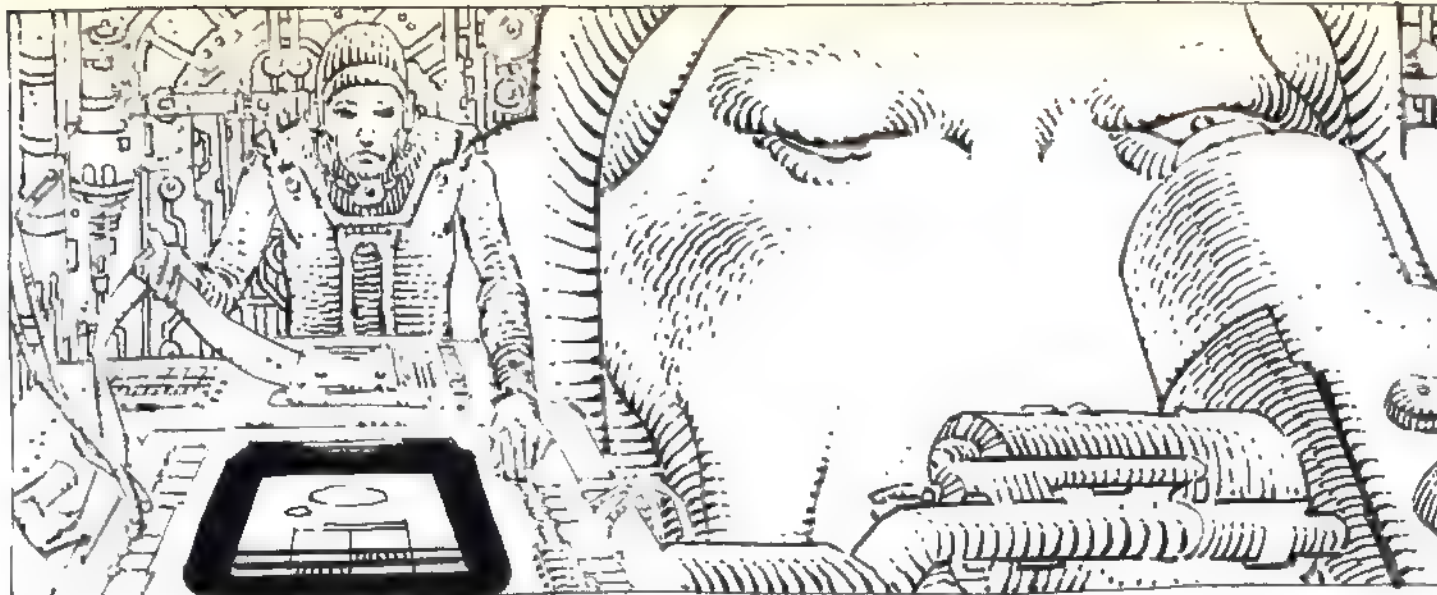
And most of the exciting things can easily get you killed.

What's so fascinating, Kelly?

It... it's too small.

There was something in Kelly's voice I'd never heard before, a perplexed, whining tone. But after he drifted to the computer terminal he did something that had me literally in shock! He repeated himself.

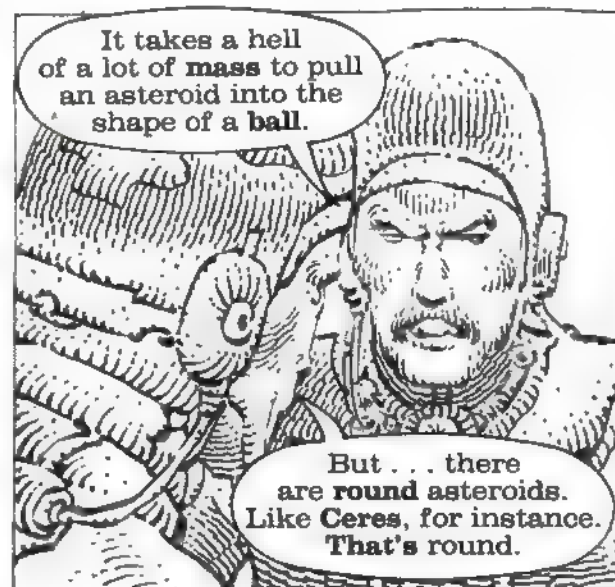
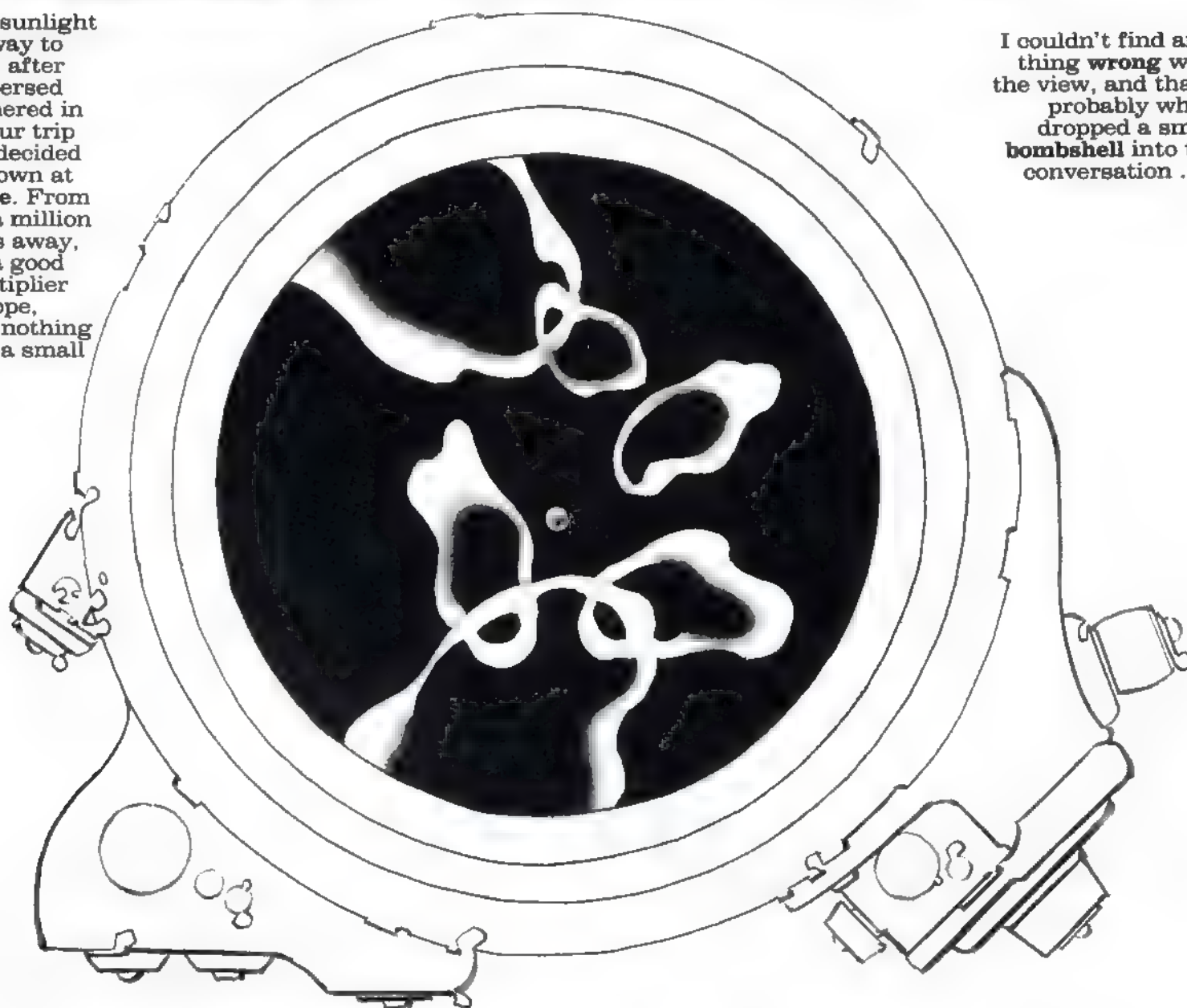
Several times... as if to convince the four walls of the ship of the validity of his nebulous argument!



When he finally stopped, he stood still for a moment, then began to peck away at his pocketbrain like a starved vulture. As soon as I was sure he wasn't going to try anything else, like opening the airlock, for a breath of fresh vacuum, I made my way to the 'scope, to catch my first glimpse of the Fluke he was babbling about.

Whatever sunlight made its way to the Fluke, after being dispersed and smothered in its half hour trip from Sol, decided to settle down at the surface. From only half a million kilometers away, and with a good photo-multiplier on the 'scope, there was nothing to see but a small grey ball.

I couldn't find anything wrong with the view, and that's probably why I dropped a small bombshell into the conversation . . . !



Kelly was screaming again, and that was worrying me. With a good hundred million miles between me and the next room, it was no place to discover a friend's newfound unpleasant characteristics!

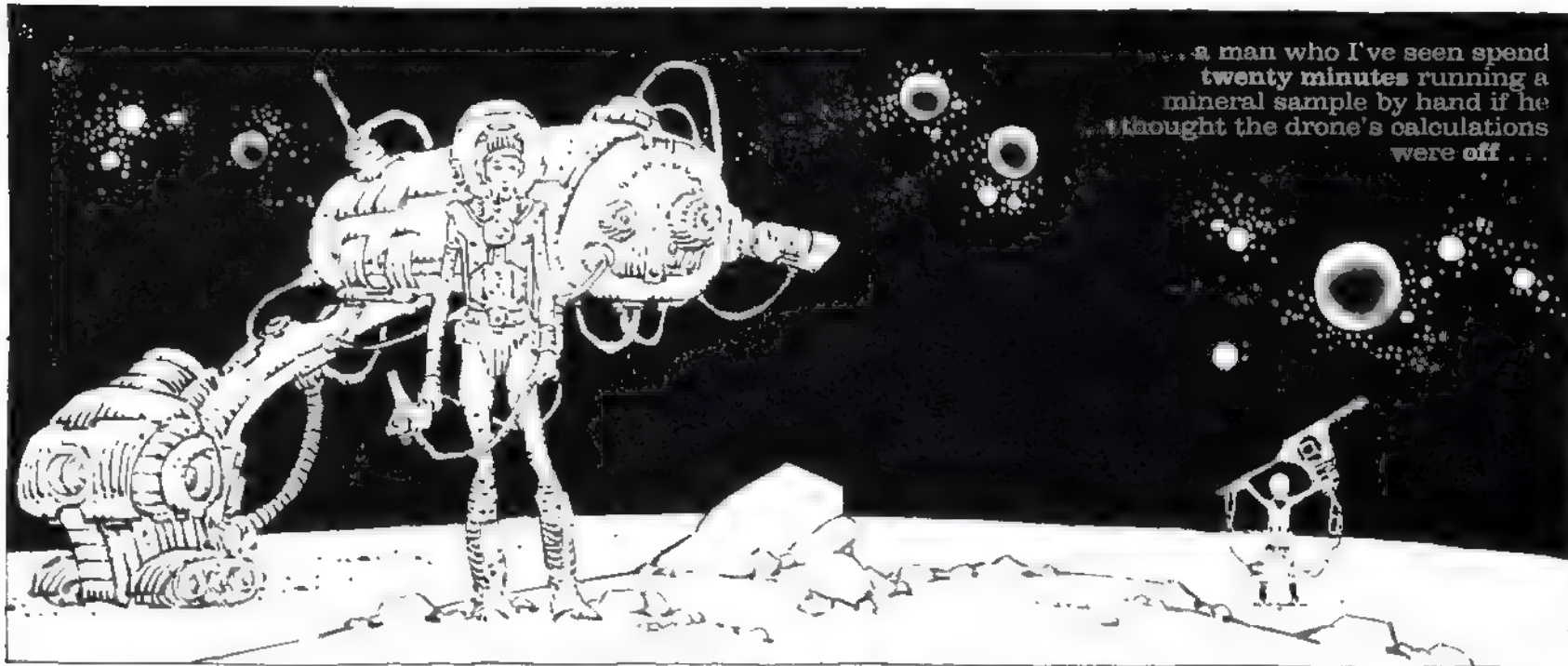
Its mass we know from the probe, and it was rather massive. But if it's that small, it's going to have to be as dense as pure uranium.

But the damn thing isn't the slightest bit radioactive!

That's fine for Ceres. It has enough mass for gravity. It can pull itself in! But can you tell me how you can pack enough mass into a body that's only three kilometers wide?

I sure as hell can't!

I couldn't move, I couldn't think straight, and that had me terrified. Here was a fellow I've known a good piece of my life . . .

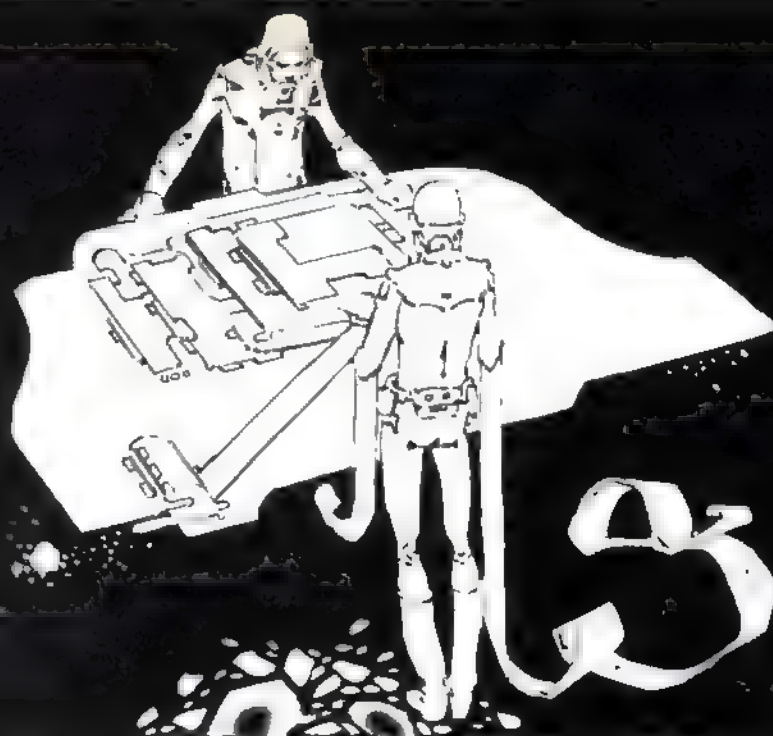


... a man who I've seen spend twenty minutes running a mineral sample by hand if he thought the drone's calculations were off . . .



... Here he was, wringing his hands, screaming in an oversized closet of a lifepod, and literally trying to wrench the answers out of the computers. I had every right to be terrified, but I had to keep calm at all costs. It wasn't that easy though, it was getting extremely tempting to yell back at him.

We were stuck. We had no idea what we were heading for. So to calm both of us down, we tried to figure what kind of ugly, nasty things the Fluke couldn't possibly be



"Neutron star fragment ... out. Something that big would have been found centuries ago, by its gravitational pull alone!"

"Mini Black Hole ... out. It would swallow an asteroid like that in an instant, and would be radioactive as all get-out!"

"Alien Artifact ... come off it! I could think up a dozen different places to put one where they'd be as hard to reach. Hmm ... sadistic aliens!"

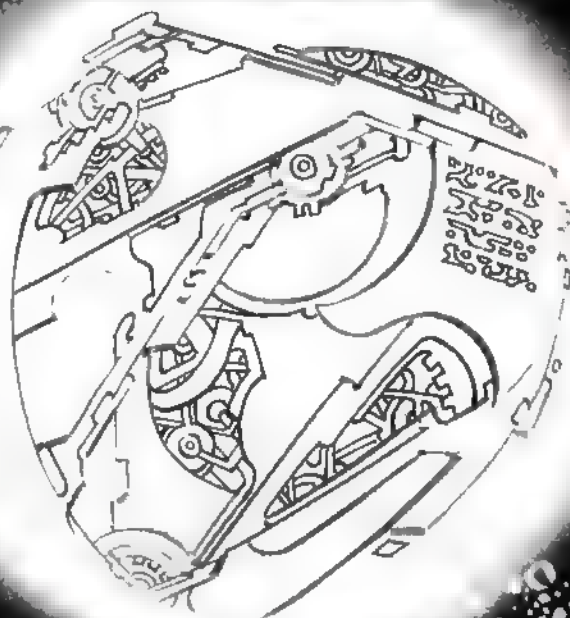
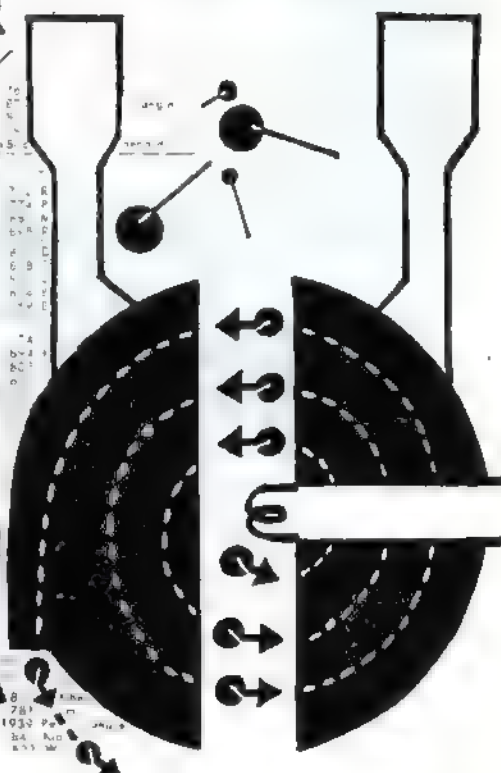
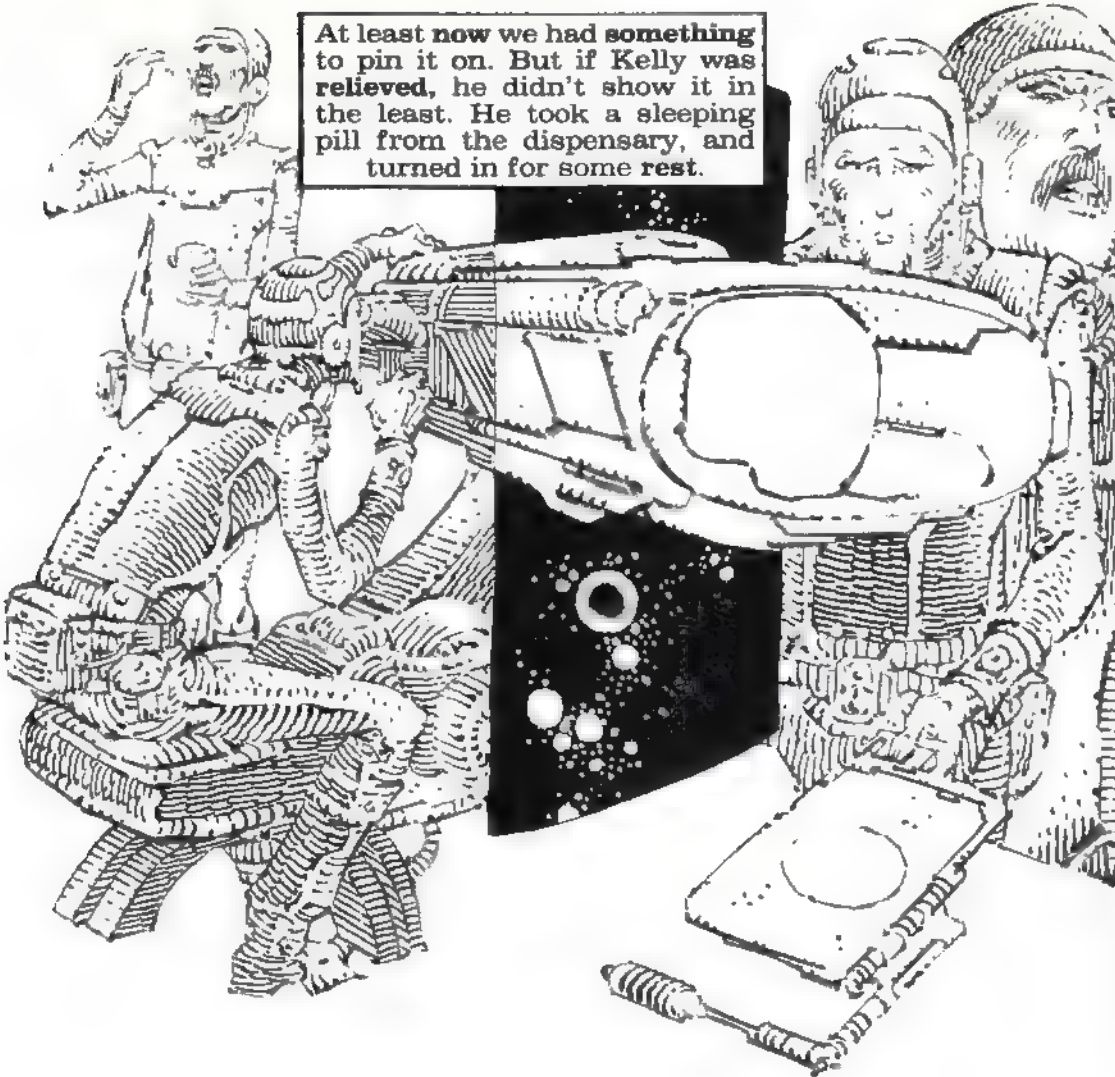


TABLE OF ELEMENTS

Element	Symbol	At. No.	At. Weight	Electronic Configuration	Atomic Abundance (by vol.)	Atomic Abundance (by wt.)	Atomic Weight	Ionization Potential	Melting Point	Boiling Point	Density	Electrical Resistivity	Ionization Potential
Hydrogen	H	1	1.0079	1s ¹	86.1	1.0001	1.0079	13.6	-259.1	-252.9	0.08988	100	13.6
Helium	He	2	4.0026	1s ²	5.0	4.0026	4.0026	24.6	-272.5	-268.9	0.1786	100	24.6
Lithium	Li	3	6.941	1s ² 2s ¹	7.0	6.941	6.941	5.4	180.5	1347	0.534	9.28	5.4
Beryllium	Be	4	9.0122	1s ² 2s ²	0.0002	9.0122	9.0122	9.0	1287	2970	1.85	100	9.0
Boron	B	5	10.811	1s ² 2s ² 2p ¹	0.0004	10.811	10.811	8.0	2319	2550	2.34	100	8.0
Carbon	C	6	12.011	1s ² 2s ² 2p ²	0.0009	12.011	12.011	11.4	3550	4827	2.26	100	11.4
Nitrogen	N	7	14.007	1s ² 2s ² 2p ³	0.0013	14.007	14.007	14.5	3550	4827	1.25	100	14.5
Oxygen	O	8	15.999	1s ² 2s ² 2p ⁴	0.0019	15.999	15.999	13.6	54.8	500.7	1.43	100	13.6
Fluorine	F	9	18.998	1s ² 2s ² 2p ⁵	0.0006	18.998	18.998	18.8	53.5	31.8	1.68	100	18.8
Neon	Ne	10	20.180	1s ² 2s ² 2p ⁶	0.000009	20.180	20.180	21.6	24.7	-248.6	0.9002	100	21.6
Sodium	Na	11	22.990	1s ² 2s ² 2p ⁶ 3s ¹	0.000007	22.990	22.990	5.1	97.8	883	0.97	100	5.1
Magnesium	Mg	12	24.305	1s ² 2s ² 2p ⁶ 3s ²	0.000001	24.305	24.305	7.4	923	1363	1.74	100	7.4
Aluminum	Al	13	26.982	1s ² 2s ² 2p ⁶ 3s ² 3p ¹	0.000008	26.982	26.982	5.8	933	2542	2.70	100	5.8
Silicon	Si	14	28.086	1s ² 2s ² 2p ⁶ 3s ² 3p ²	0.000005	28.086	28.086	8.1	1685	2966	2.33	100	8.1
Phosphorus	P	15	30.974	1s ² 2s ² 2p ⁶ 3s ² 3p ³	0.000002	30.974	30.974	10.5	1771	2810	1.82	100	10.5
Sulfur	S	16	32.06	1s ² 2s ² 2p ⁶ 3s ² 3p ⁴	0.000004	32.06	32.06	10.0	115.2	2178	2.07	100	10.0
Chlorine	Cl	17	35.453	1s ² 2s ² 2p ⁶ 3s ² 3p ⁵	0.000002	35.453	35.453	12.1	176.3	341.9	1.56	100	12.1
Argon	Ar	18	39.948	1s ² 2s ² 2p ⁶ 3s ² 3p ⁶	0.0000009	39.948	39.948	15.8	-182.5	-185.7	1.42	100	15.8
Potassium	K	19	39.098	1s ² 2s ² 2p ⁶ 3s ² 3p ⁶ 4s ¹	0.0000017	39.098	39.098	4.2	336.7	1043	0.86	100	4.2
Calcium	Ca	20	40.078	1s ² 2s ² 2p ⁶ 3s ² 3p ⁶ 4s ²	0.0000014	40.078	40.078	6.0	842.8	1484	1.54	100	6.0
Scandium	Sc	21	44.956	1s ² 2s ² 2p ⁶ 3s ² 3p ⁶ 3d ¹ 4s ²	0.0000001	44.956	44.956	6.3	1539	2835	2.98	100	6.3
Titanium	Ti	22	47.88	1s ² 2s ² 2p ⁶ 3s ² 3p ⁶ 3d ² 4s ²	0.0000005	47.88	47.88	7.7	1356	2537	4.54	100	7.7
Vanadium	V	23	50.942	1s ² 2s ² 2p ⁶ 3s ² 3p ⁶ 3d ³ 4s ²	0.0000001	50.942	50.942	6.3	1910	3407	6.1	100	6.3
Chromium	Cr	24	51.996	1s ² 2s ² 2p ⁶ 3s ² 3p ⁶ 3d ⁵ 4s ¹	0.00000007	51.996	51.996	7.1	1907	2654	7.1	100	7.1
Manganese	Mn	25	54.938	1s ² 2s ² 2p ⁶ 3s ² 3p ⁶ 3d ⁵ 4s ²	0.00000001	54.938	54.938	7.4	1769	2471	7.4	100	7.4
Iron	Fe	26	55.845	1s ² 2s ² 2p ⁶ 3s ² 3p ⁶ 3d ⁶ 4s ²	0.00000005	55.845	55.845	7.9	1538	2731	7.87	100	7.9
Cobalt	Co	27	58.933	1s ² 2s ² 2p ⁶ 3s ² 3p ⁶ 3d ⁷ 4s ²	0.00000001	58.933	58.933	7.8	1495	2709	8.86	100	7.8
Nickel	Ni	28	58.69	1s ² 2s ² 2p ⁶ 3s ² 3p ⁶ 3d ⁸ 4s ²	0.00000008	58.69	58.69	7.6	1455	2732	8.87	100	7.6
Copper	Cu	29	63.546	1s ² 2s ² 2p ⁶ 3s ² 3p ⁶ 3d ¹⁰ 4s ¹	0.00000001	63.546	63.546	7.7	1357	2562	8.96	100	7.7
Zinc	Zn	30	65.38	1s ² 2s ² 2p ⁶ 3s ² 3p ⁶ 3d ¹⁰ 4s ²	0.00000001	65.38	65.38	9.4	1180	2467	7.14	100	9.4
Gallium	Ga	31	69.723	1s ² 2s ² 2p ⁶ 3s ² 3p ⁶ 3d ¹⁰ 4p ¹	0.00000001	69.723	69.723	5.8	302.9	2204	5.91	100	5.8
Germanium	Ge	32	72.64	1s ² 2s ² 2p ⁶ 3s ² 3p ⁶ 3d ¹⁰ 4p ²	0.00000001	72.64	72.64	7.6	1211	2260	5.32	100	7.6
Arsenic	As	33	74.922	1s ² 2s ² 2p ⁶ 3s ² 3p ⁶ 3d ¹⁰ 4p ³	0.00000001	74.922	74.922	9.8	911	2196	5.78	100	9.8
Selenium	Se	34	78.96	1s ² 2s ² 2p ⁶ 3s ² 3p ⁶ 3d ¹⁰ 4p ⁴	0.00000001	78.96	78.96	10.4	344.2	2179	6.49	100	10.4
Bromine	Br	35	79.904	1s ² 2s ² 2p ⁶ 3s ² 3p ⁶ 3d ¹⁰ 4p ⁵	0.00000001	79.904	79.904	11.5	265.8	201.1	4.88	100	11.5
Krypton	Kr	36	83.80	1s ² 2s ² 2p ⁶ 3s ² 3p ⁶ 3d ¹⁰ 4p ⁶	0.00000001	83.80	83.80	14.0	-153.3	-152.3	3.71	100	14.0
Rubidium	Rb	37	85.468	1s ² 2s ² 2p ⁶ 3s ² 3p ⁶ 3d ¹⁰ 4p ⁶ 5s ¹	0.00000001	85.468	85.468	4.1	39.3	686	1.27	100	4.1
Strontium	Sr	38	87.62	1s ² 2s ² 2p ⁶ 3s ² 3p ⁶ 3d ¹⁰ 4p ⁶ 5s ²	0.00000001	87.62	87.62	5.5	908	1382	2.54	100	5.5
Yttrium	Y	39	88.906	1s ² 2s ² 2p ⁶ 3s ² 3p ⁶ 3d ¹⁰ 4p ⁶ 5s ² 4d ¹	0.00000001	88.906	88.906	4.3	1522	2770	4.47	100	4.3
Zirconium	Zr	40	91.224	1s ² 2s ² 2p ⁶ 3s ² 3p ⁶ 3d ¹⁰ 4p ⁶ 5s ² 4d ²	0.00000001	91.224	91.224	6.9	1555	2710	6.49	100	6.9
Niobium	Nb	41	92.906	1s ² 2s ² 2p ⁶ 3s ² 3p ⁶ 3d ¹⁰ 4p ⁶ 5s ² 4d ⁴ 5p ¹	0.00000001	92.906	92.906	7.4	2477	2701	8.58	100	7.4
Molybdenum	Mo	42	95.94	1s ² 2s ² 2p ⁶ 3s ² 3p ⁶ 3d ¹⁰ 4p ⁶ 5s ¹ 4d ⁵	0.00000001	95.94	95.94	7.1	2623	2623	10.22	100	7.1
Technetium	Tc	43	98.906	1s ² 2s ² 2p ⁶ 3s ² 3p ⁶ 3d ¹⁰ 4p ⁶ 5s ² 4d ⁵	0.00000001	98.906	98.906	7.2	2430	2701	11.6	100	7.2
Ruthenium	Ru	44	101.07	1s ² 2s ² 2p ⁶ 3s ² 3p ⁶ 3d ¹⁰ 4p ⁶ 5s ¹ 4d ⁶	0.00000001	101.07	101.07	7.4	2610	2701	12.35	100	7.4
Rhodium	Rh	45	102.91	1s ² 2s ² 2p ⁶ 3s ² 3p ⁶ 3d ¹⁰ 4p ⁶ 5s ¹ 4d ⁷	0.00000001	102.91	102.91	7.8	2661	2701	12.44	100	7.8

Super Heavy, but stable elements were our best bet. It was unusual, but nowhere near as weird as any of the others.





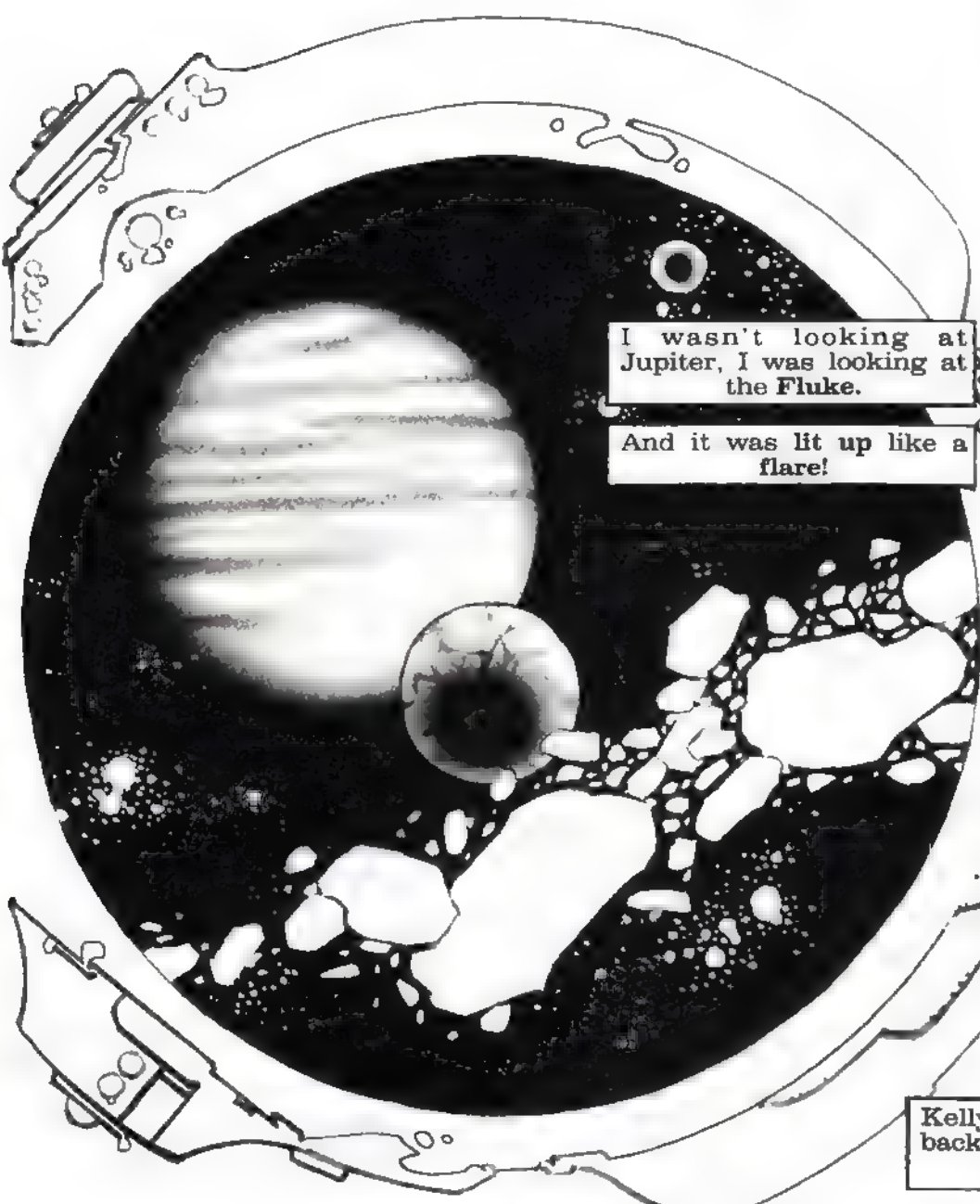
At least now we had something to pin it on. But if Kelly was relieved, he didn't show it in the least. He took a sleeping pill from the dispensary, and turned in for some rest.

I didn't have the heart or the nerve to tell him what I saw later that night...

Absent minded, I took a reading off one of the telescopes, and set up the infrascopes for a peek at Jupiter.




Somehow, I managed not to scream!



I wasn't looking at Jupiter, I was looking at the Fluke.

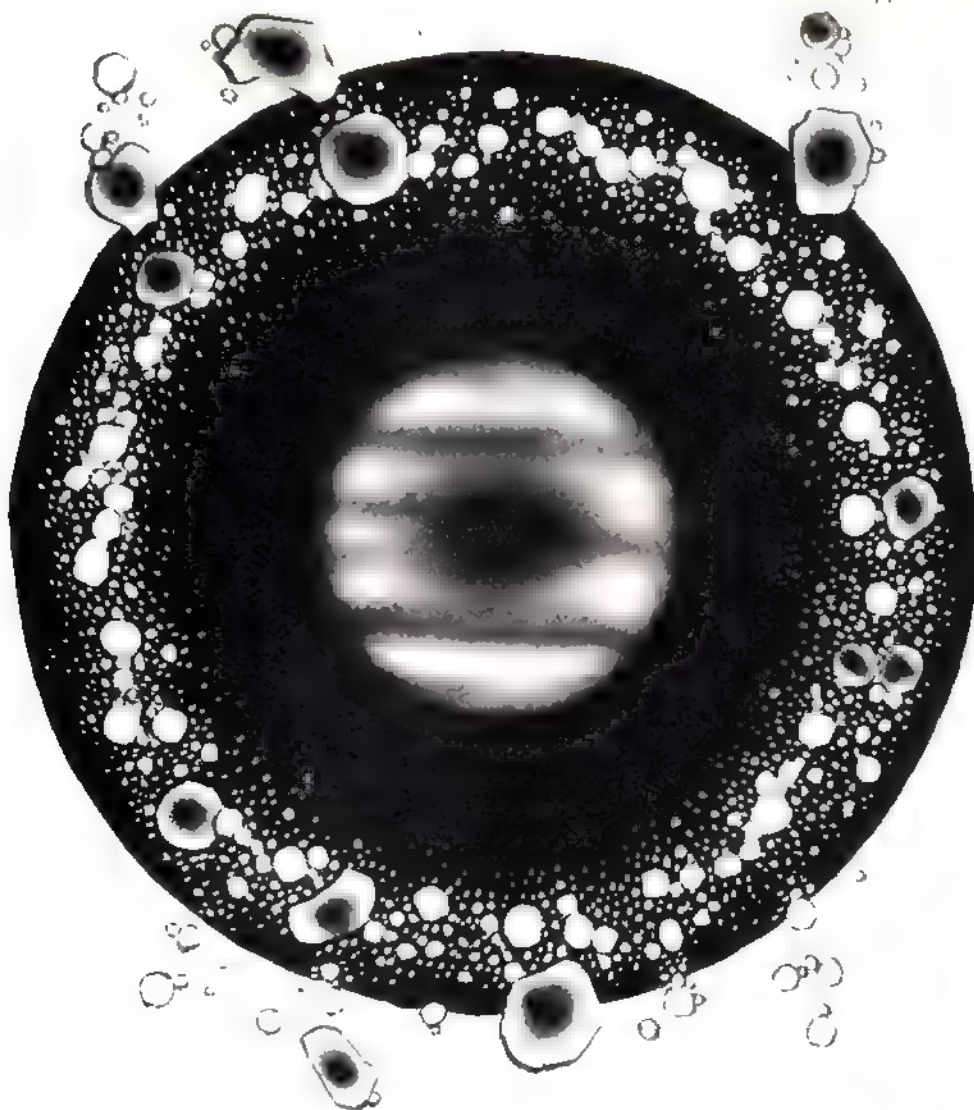
And it was lit up like a flare!



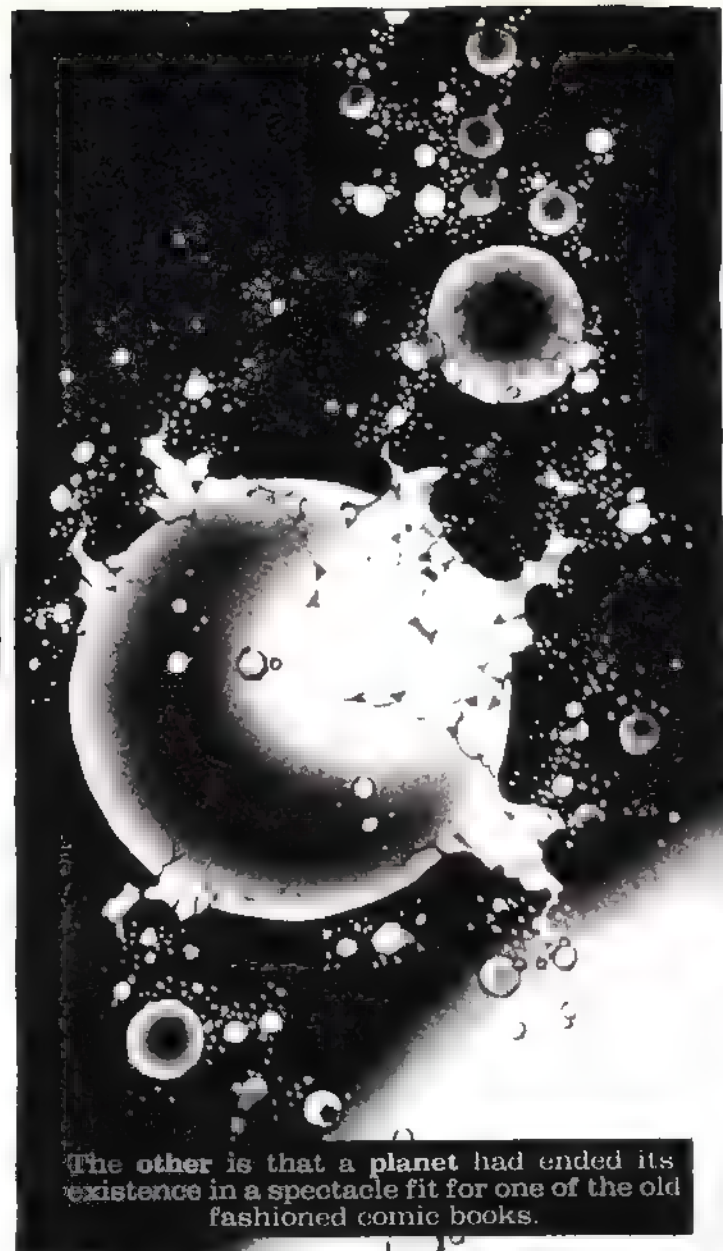
Contrary to my usual policy, I took a pill from the dispensary. Then decided against it ... and took two instead.

Kelly must have heard me, because when I got back to the 'scope he was there ... his chin drooping all the way to his knees!

There are two major theories on how the asteroids formed . . .!

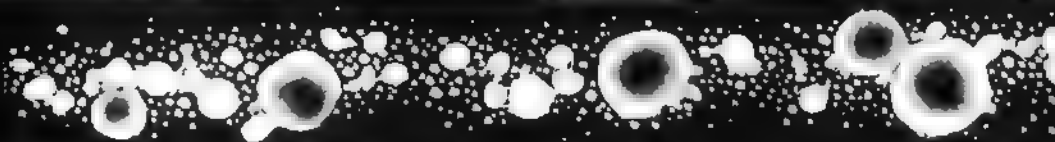


One is that the tiny fragments could never settle into a single large body due to the gravitational effects of Jupiter . . .!

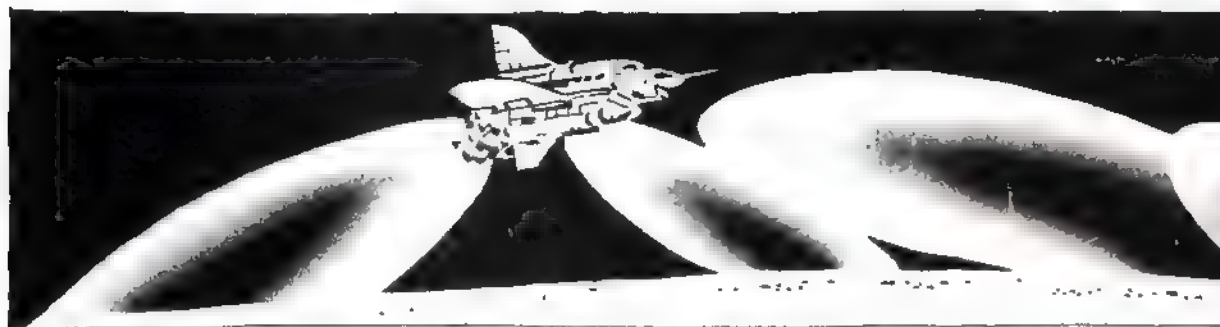


The other is that a planet had ended its existence in a spectacle fit for one of the old fashioned comic books.

Either way, it happened a long time ago.

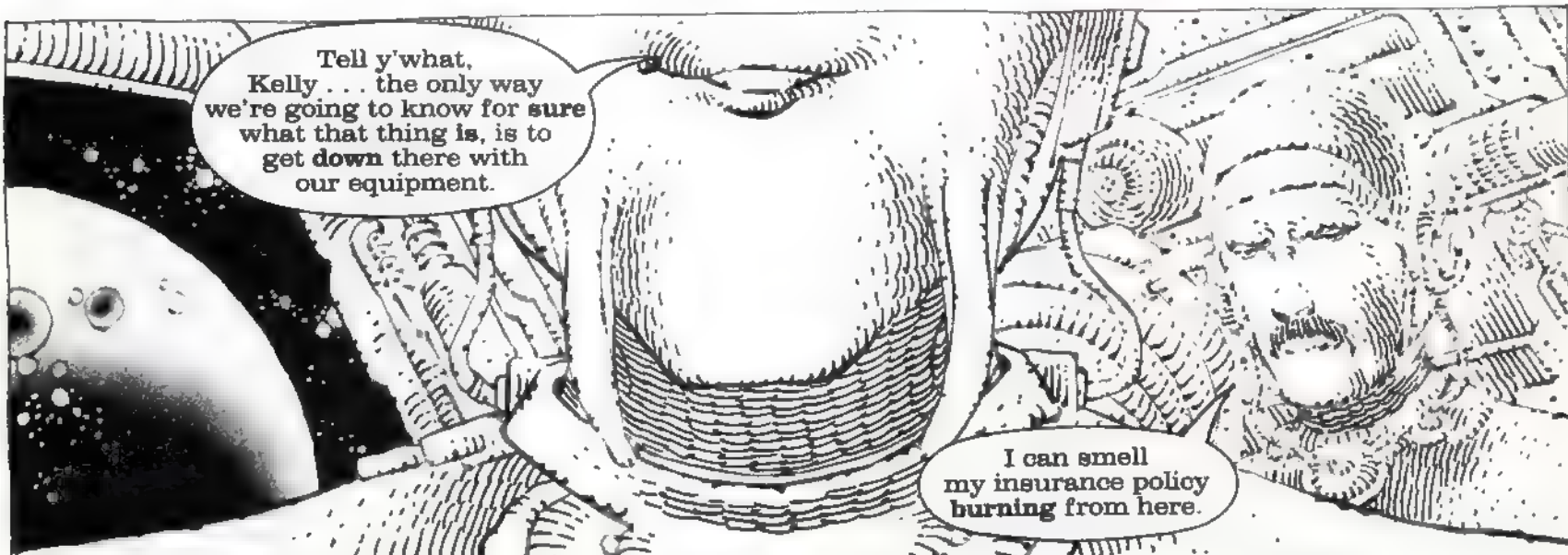


Long enough so that any rock that didn't have its own supply of heat from **radioactives** should be stone cold by now.



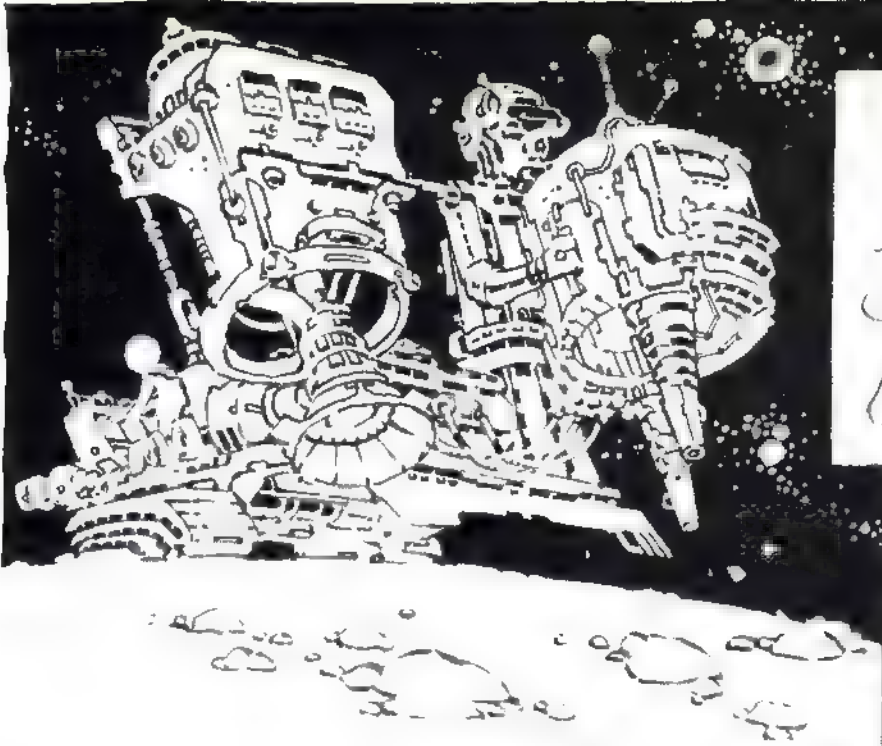
So why was this tiny rock, which by all rights should be made of some Godly unknown material, be so **warm**? Until we peppered the surface with a shot of reaction mass, **anti-matter** was still a possibility.

I was sure that the **Fluke** was not that weird.



Tell y'what, Kelly . . . the only way we're going to know for sure what that thing is, is to get down there with our equipment.

I can smell my insurance policy burning from here.



It took surprisingly little fuel and an awful lot of courage to set the ship down on the surface, but at least I had the whole lump mapped before landing. As we were taking our map survey, we added a few more oddities to our growing list of tourist attractions. . . .

To start, it wasn't a perfect ball. There were minor bulges here and there. It rotated a bit too rapidly for rocks its size. But when we charted the craters and scars, and assorted cosmic acne, we found a real oddity for the Fluke.

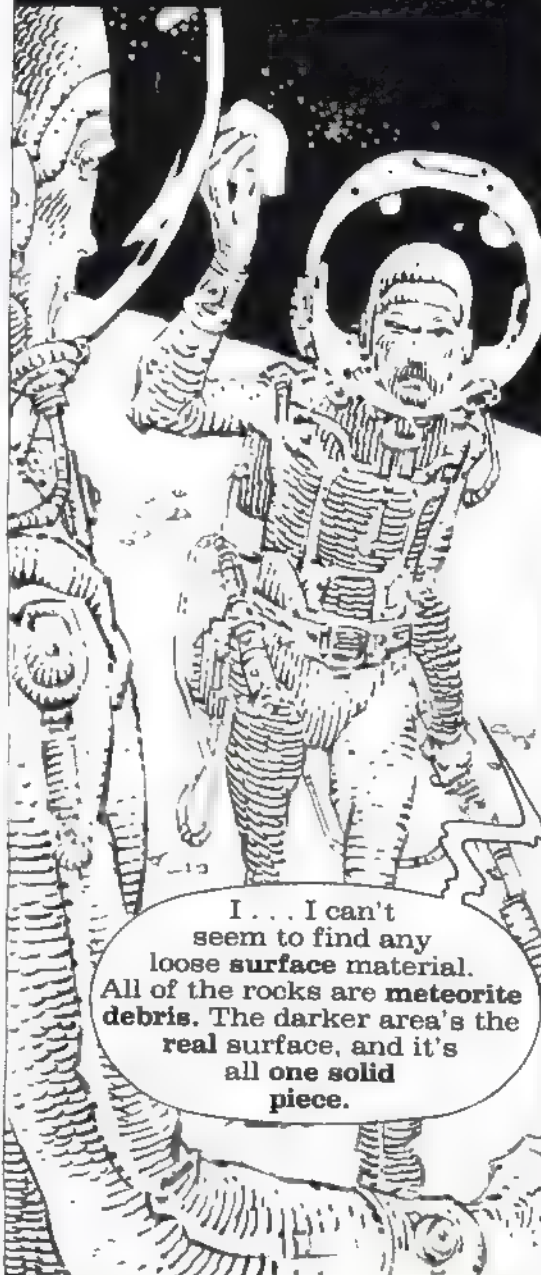
Not one crater, blemish, or whatever, went into the surface more than two feet.

The first thing I did was to have Kelly drop off the two drones on the other side of the planetoid with the laser drill. Operating a drill usually requires one human for supervision. But Kelly and I had better things to do with our time. Besides, if I did mis-program them, and by some error in timing the damn thing blew up, I didn't want to be anywhere near it.



I'd get around to filling out a violation of procedure form later.

Upon returning, Kelly wouldn't leave sight of the ship, and had only stopped on the way back to pick up a few loose samples. In the process, he added another fluke to our Fluke.



I . . . I can't seem to find any loose surface material. All of the rocks are meteorite debris. The darker area's the real surface, and it's all one solid piece.



But look at this! I tried to chip off a piece with a crysteel knife, and the damn thing wrecked the blade!

I've never heard of anything that could do that!

Nothing in nature. But I've heard of superpressure plastics that might. Still, they wouldn't be lying around here, would they?

Don't bet on it!

I kicked a small rock over a small hill, and suddenly found that I wouldn't be a bit surprised to see something short of a Lilliputian bringing it back over the gray hills and under the violet sky.

Violet sky?

The sky in space is not the deep blue of Earth or any colony world, but a sheer, deep, obsidian black. It takes an atmosphere to haze sunlight enough to blue up a sky, and there was no way the Fluke . . .

Oh, the hell with it!

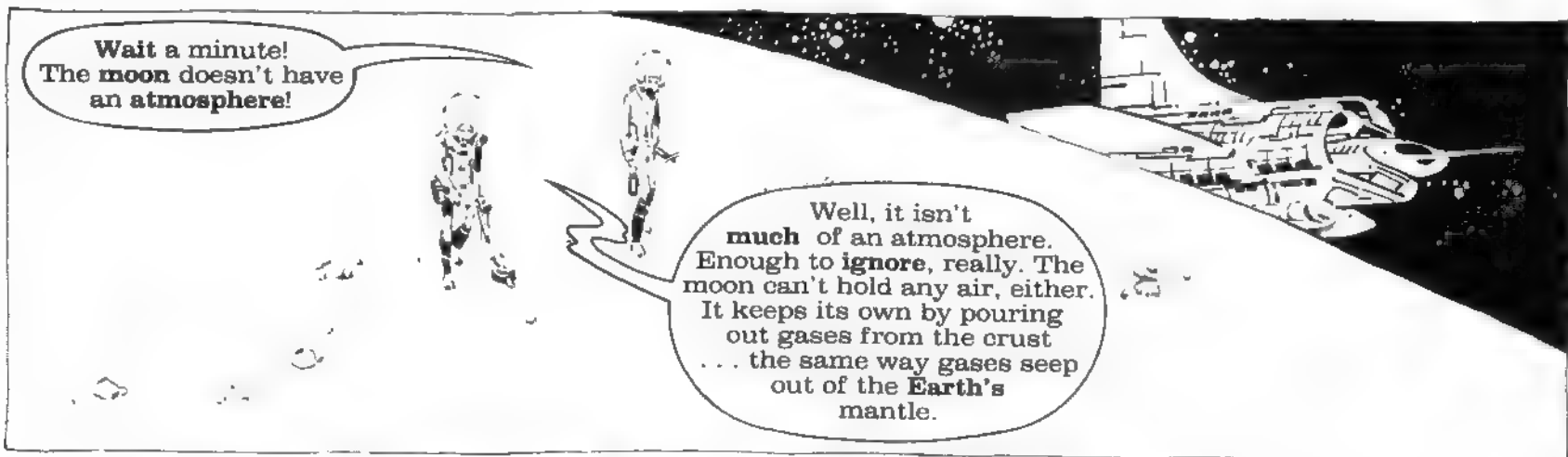
Kelly!

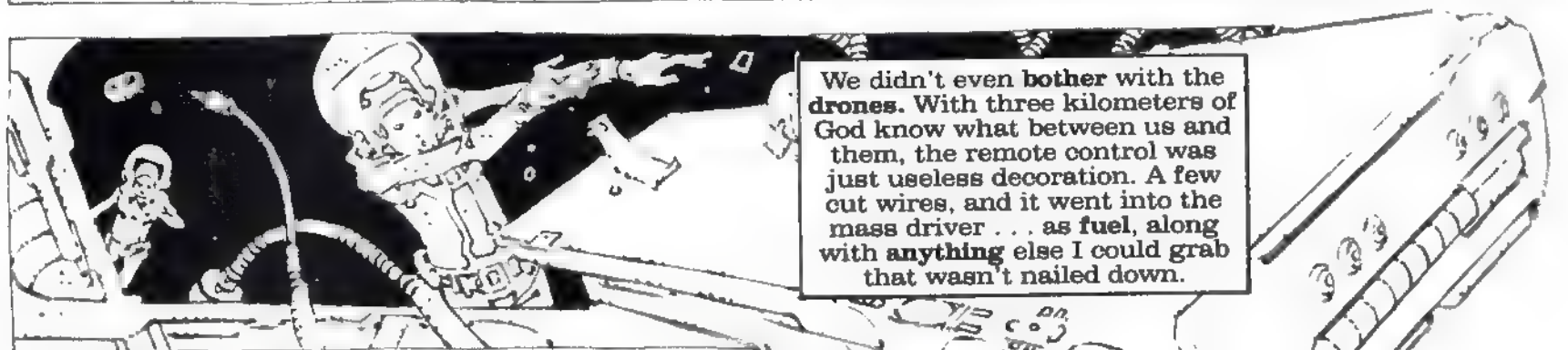
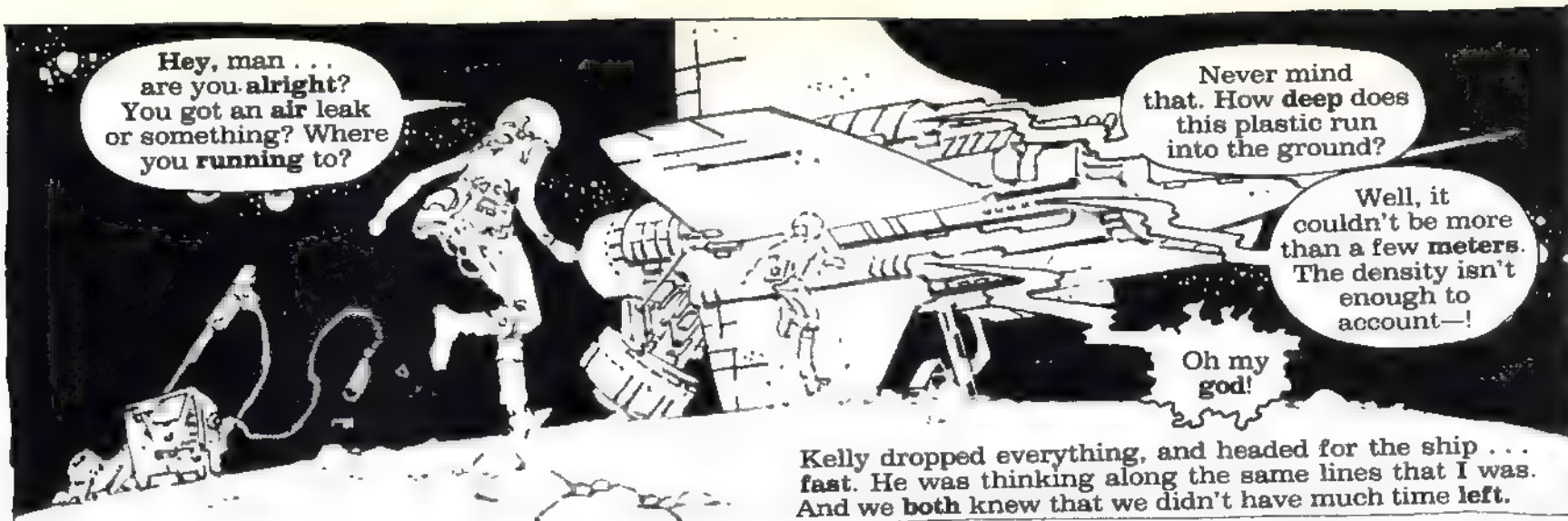
Now, don't get nervous, Kelly, but could a rock this small hold an atmosphere?

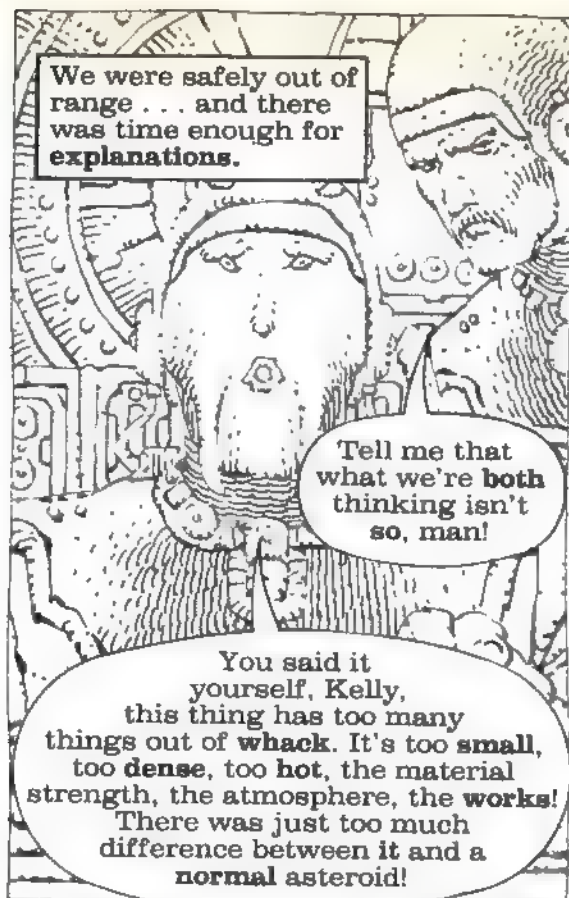
Now that's impossible. It'd blow away in a matter of hours.

Gaaa! I think I see what you're getting at!

Lemme get some equipment from the ship! Never thought we'd be needing a barometer out here. . . .



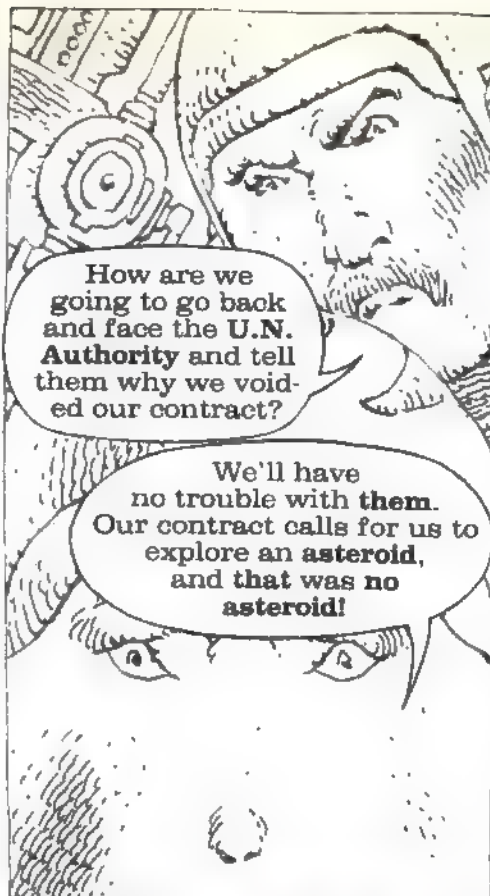




We were safely out of range . . . and there was time enough for explanations.

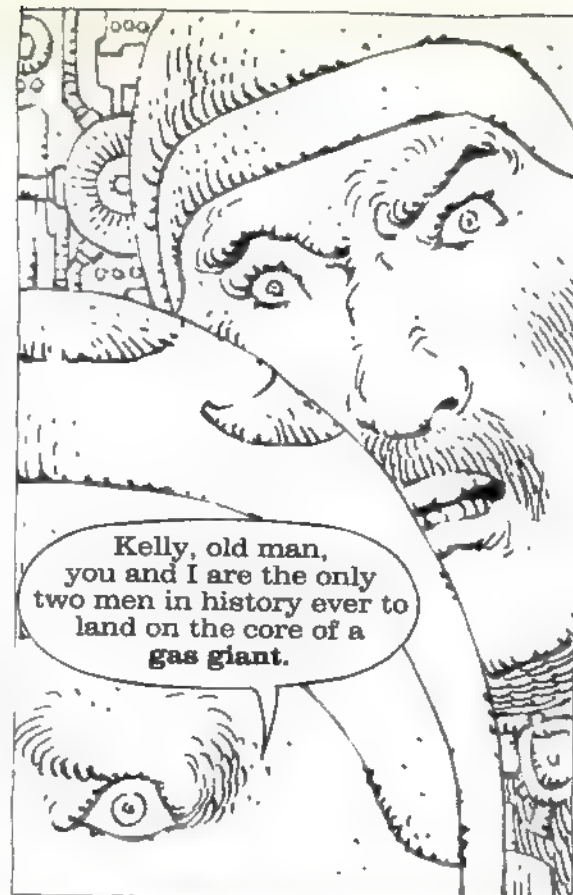
Tell me that what we're both thinking isn't so, man!

You said it yourself, Kelly, this thing has too many things out of whack. It's too small, too dense, too hot, the material strength, the atmosphere, the works! There was just too much difference between it and a normal asteroid!

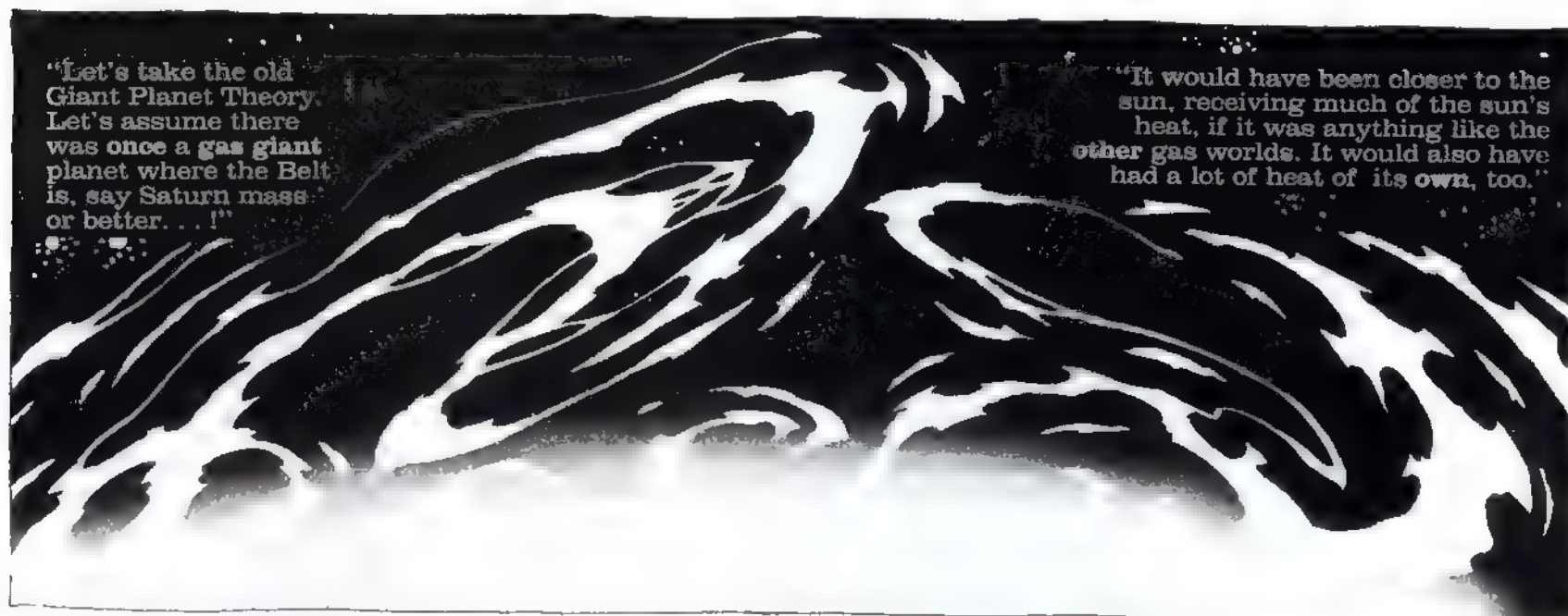


How are we going to go back and face the U.N. Authority and tell them why we voided our contract?

We'll have no trouble with them. Our contract calls for us to explore an asteroid, and that was no asteroid!

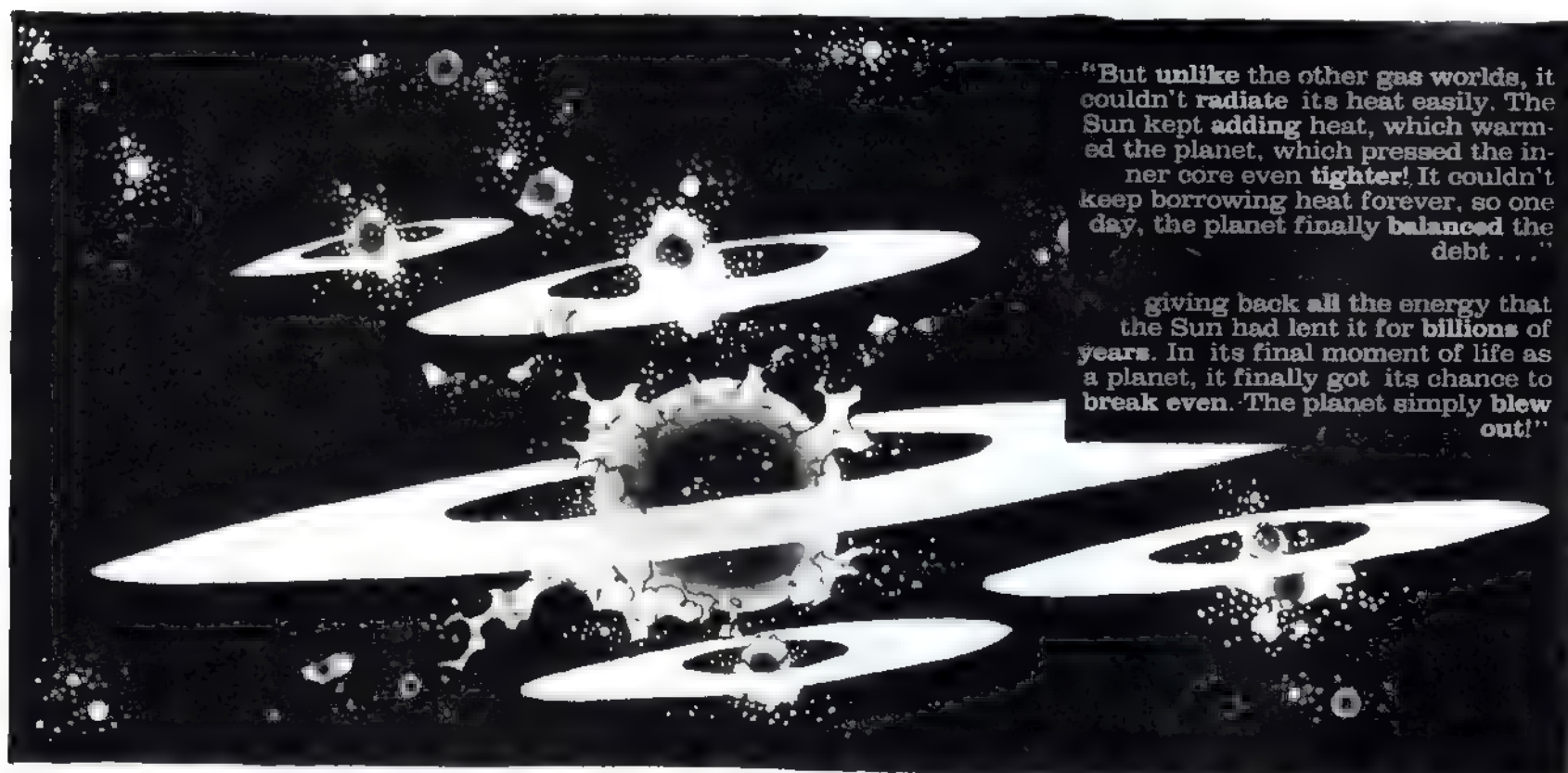


Kelly, old man, you and I are the only two men in history ever to land on the core of a gas giant.



"Let's take the old Giant Planet Theory. Let's assume there was once a gas giant planet where the Belt is, say Saturn mass or better. . . !"

"It would have been closer to the sun, receiving much of the sun's heat, if it was anything like the other gas worlds. It would also have had a lot of heat of its own, too."

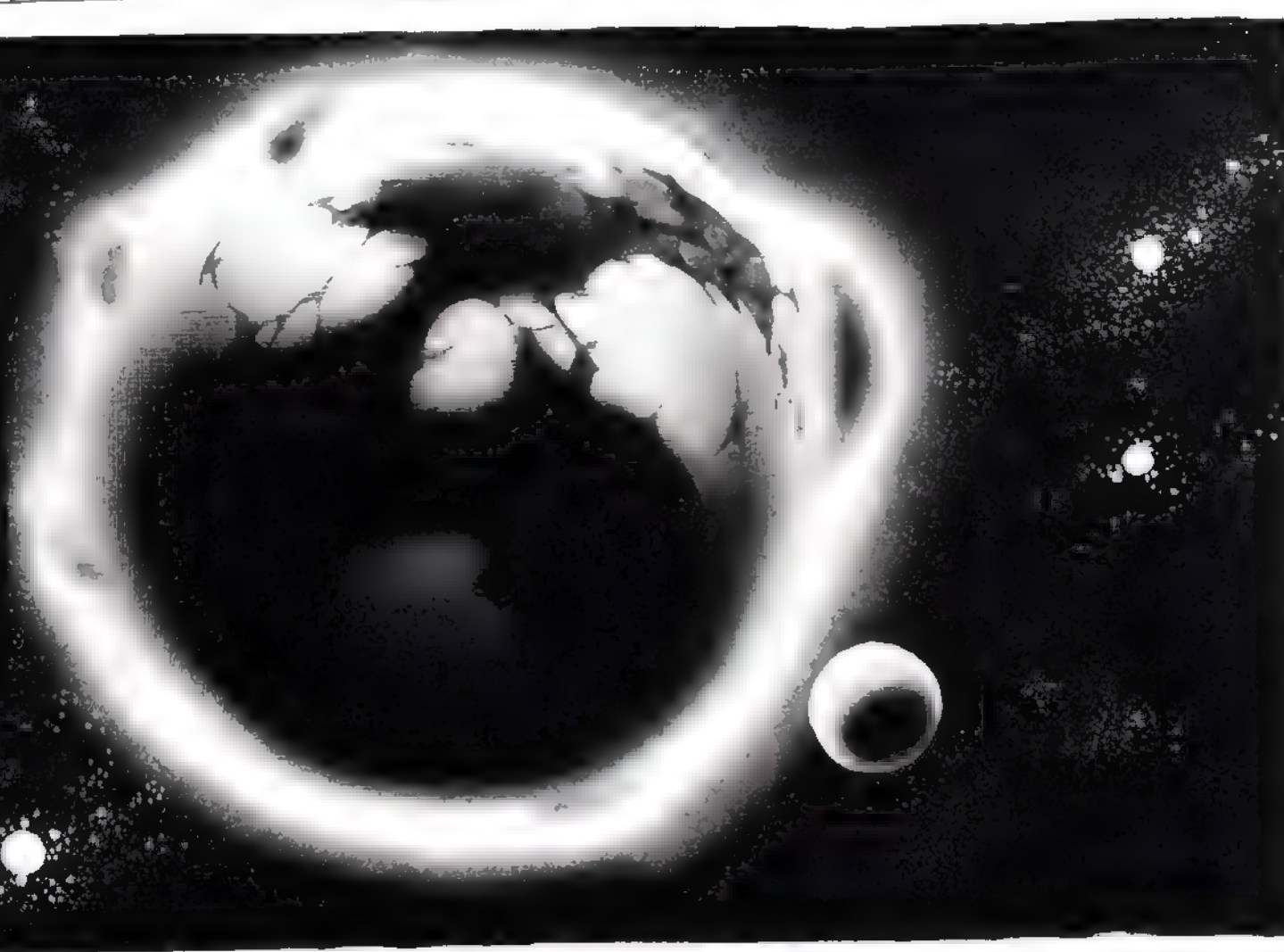


"But unlike the other gas worlds, it couldn't radiate its heat easily. The Sun kept adding heat, which warmed the planet, which pressed the inner core even tighter! It couldn't keep borrowing heat forever, so one day, the planet finally balanced the debt . . ."

giving back all the energy that the Sun had lent it for billions of years. In its final moment of life as a planet, it finally got its chance to break even. The planet simply blew out!"

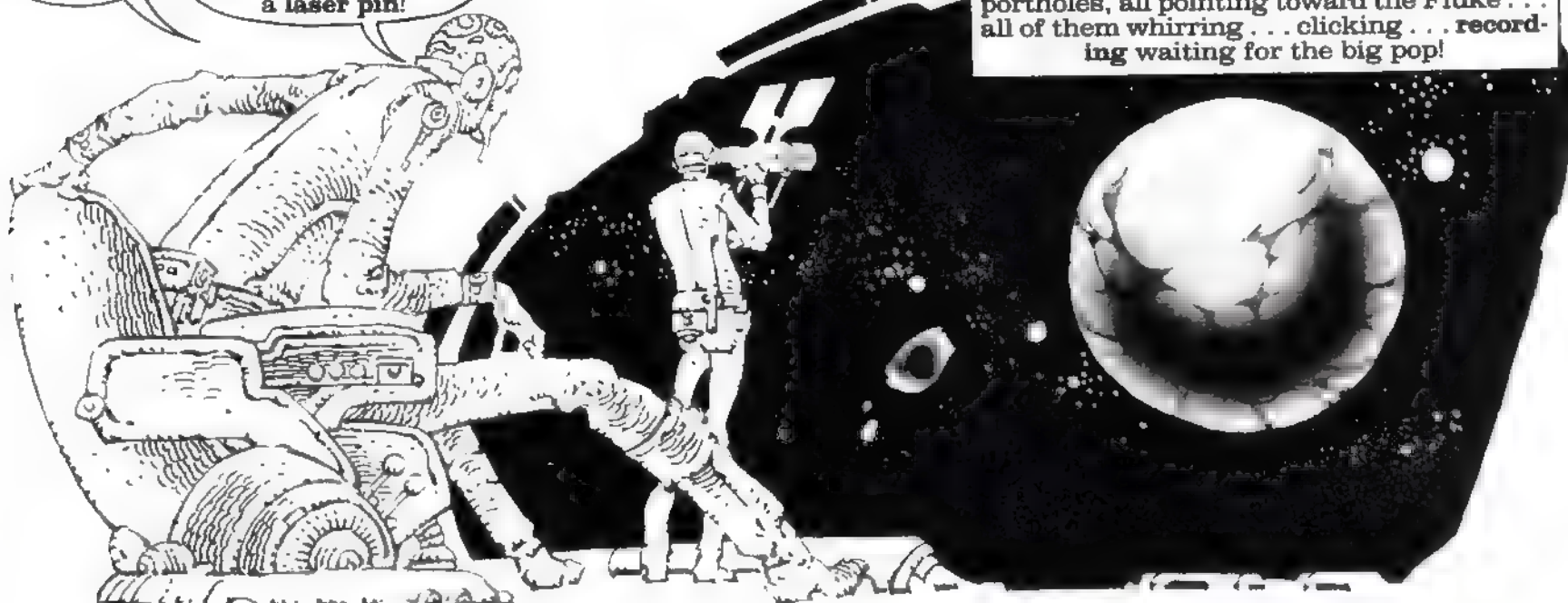


There's plenty of material in a gas giant's atmosphere, and under all that heat and pressure, you could form one of these super-plastic shells. Perhaps one of them did form, and it surrounded the core, it would contain enough gas to seep out forever.



So it is a balloon!

And on the other side of the planet, two drones are about to pop it with a laser pin!





To say it was impressive would be a lie. If all the hazy, multicolored nebulae were allowed to escape into the night through a pinhole as a tiny ball grows white hot and explodes like a hell-fire incarnate, it would be describing only a tiny part of the experience.

When the shock wave hit us, we could hear, from ten thousand miles away, through the super-thin air outside, the shriek of a dying planet.

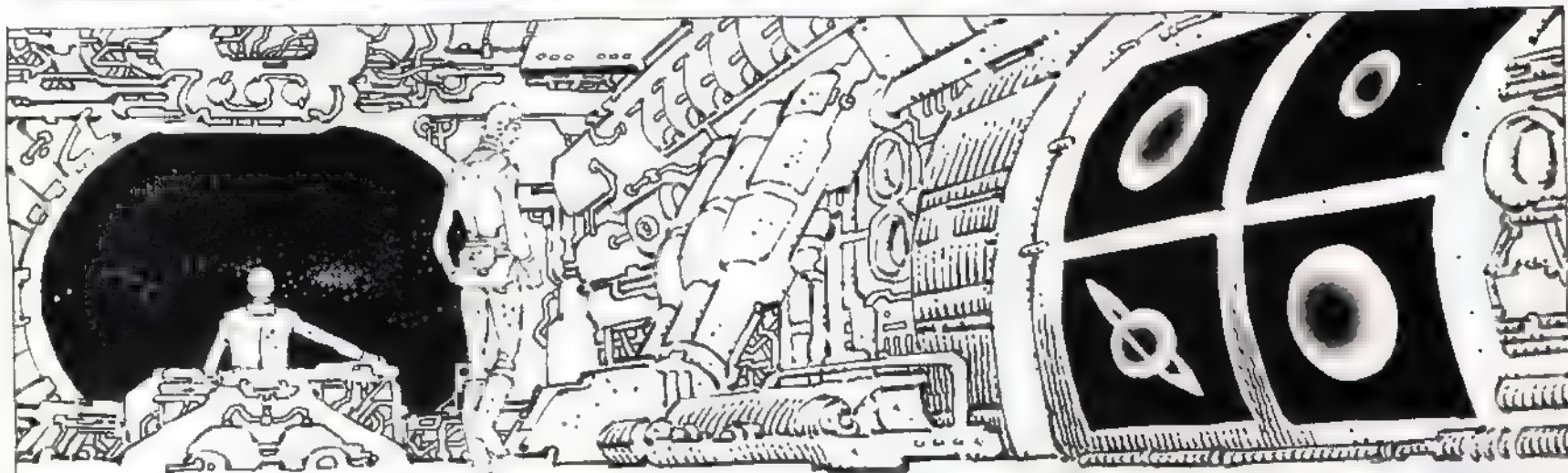


Kelly didn't move for nearly an hour after the explosion. I'm sure, though, that he was one of the **happiest** humans in creation. On his scanners, and in our minds, was a view of a place where even the finest achievements of Man cannot penetrate . . . the **core** of a mammoth world.

Then again, is he happy? Maybe I'm **wrong** . . .

Perhaps **all** the giant worlds are unstable. If the **gas giants**, the **true** planets compared with the dustballs that **Men** dwell on, aren't stable bodies, then sooner or later, one by one, they **too** will repay the debt to the star they circle, leaving only **debris** and **dust** behind.

And that would truly be a **shame!**



Kelly keeps a few pictures of the **gas giants** by his bunk, nowadays. And whenever he passes them, you know what he's thinking, even if he doesn't say it . . .

. . . one down . . .
four to go . . .!

Oh, wise and benevolent one, you look as though the weight of Allah's mountain is upon your back.

It is so, faithful Kato. For nigh onto a fortnight my nubian princesses have failed to accord me the corporeal homage which is rightfully mine.

And my beautiful bride-to-be, Herma, has been here for weeks and has refused to come to my bed even once!

Would that this lowly sewer grub not have to tell you, my liege . . . ! I have heard the whispers of your royal consorts . . . !

It is said that the Viking Princess prefers feminine favors over masculine firmament.

Her corrupt ways are turning the royal wives against you.

N-no! It cannot be! I must see with my own eyes!

HERMA

Frozen within a solid wall of ice for a thousand years, a legendary Norse Princess rises again to wreak havoc and spread her lascivious sins throughout the morally bankrupt world of 1984 . . . and in particular the tiny but opulent shiekhdom of Ali Khan Sade.

Oh, Herma . . . ! Show me again the forty-nine positions of the Valhallic Kama Sutra.

No! It is my turn, Herma!

Take me, Princess . . . me!





Oh, faithful Kato, rip these odious eyes from my vile skull that I might not see more of this shameless decadence.

However shall I recapture the hearts of my myriad beloveds?



I fear that the cancer is terminal, oh benevolent one.

Already the royal concubines speak of the infamous "quickie Mexican divorce . . . !"

Allah spare me. It cannot be!



My . . . my royal pets . . . ! Wherefore do thou goest without leave of your philanthropic master?

Why, you pompous, limp-limbed dildo! We have no master! We are free women! Have you not heard of E.R.A., Women's Liberation and the philosophies of Helen Gurley Brown?

My dearests, surely you jest! Is it not written in the sacred scrolls that womankind shall be owned and bred as cattle and other burdensome beasts?



If it is so, then perhaps the occupants within the royal stables can assuage your biological needs far better than we, oh bastion of chauvinistic solicitude!

Gentle Herma has shown us that we can do quite well without your mini-scrotumed lechering, thank you!

She has also made us blissfully aware of the amplitude of benefits to be derived from the paganistic ritual known as divorce . . . !

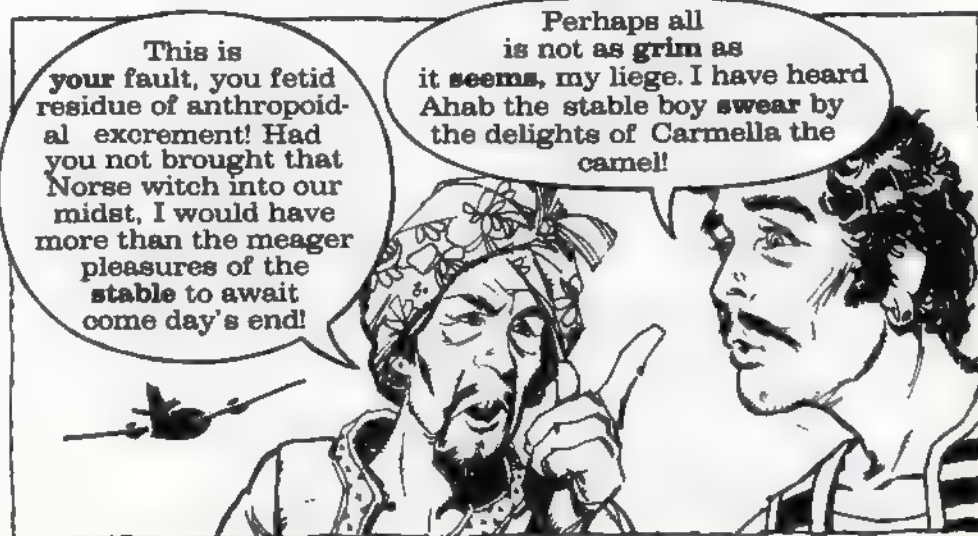


Did you know, for example, that each of your thirty-two wives is entitled to one-half of your royal kingdom?

Yet, since there can be but two halves, you can bet your royal cummerbund that you will be hearing from the attorneys of thirty of us!

This is the kiss off, dink nuts! The royal harem is no more! We are going out into the world and have some fun!

Khandy . . . dearest! Does this mean what I think it means?



This is your fault, you fetid residue of anthropoidal excrement! Had you not brought that Norse witch into our midst, I would have more than the meager pleasures of the stable to await come day's end!

Perhaps all is not as grim as it seems, my liege. I have heard Ahab the stable boy swear by the delights of Carmella the camel!

Some time later, on the parched sands of Mexico's Vaya con Dios desert, another argument concerning a woman's dubious duties rages like a torrential hellfire within an anachronistic settlement.



Bot, Chili, mi amor! Geev op these nonsense ov being beeg-time bandito like brave and clever Frito!

A wooman's place ees on her bock! Joost ask eeny mon!

Frito! Frito! Frito! Whatever am I going to do with you? You're living in the past. Today's woman is far more than a mere sex object!

She has inner needs which must be fulfilled before all else!

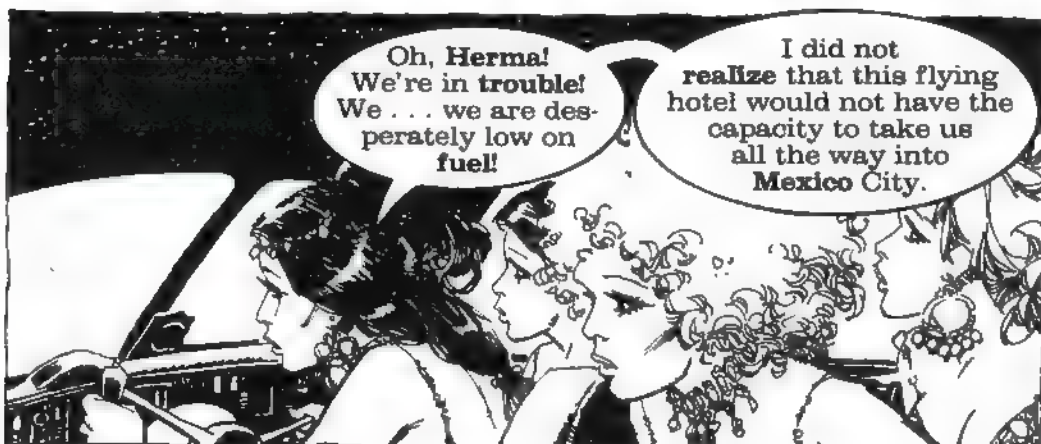


Ah . . . now we are speaking thee same language, my leetle cucaracha! Frito weel feel all your eener needs!

Joost feel how hees hose ees gossed up and ready to be pumped eento yohr tahnk!

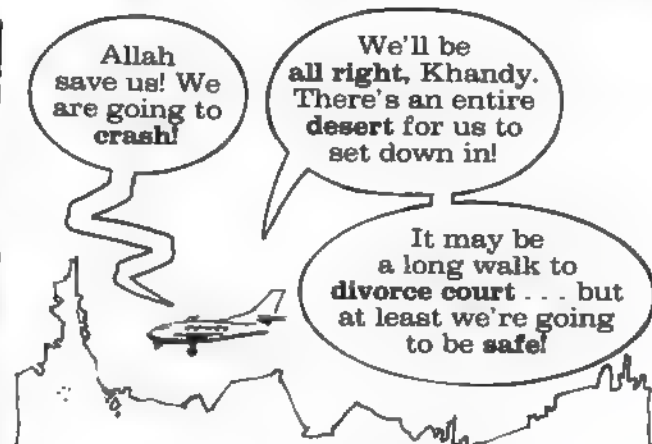


Down, greaseball! When this little Dodge wants to be serviced, she'll let you know!



Oh, Herma! We're in trouble! We . . . we are desperately low on fuel!

I did not realize that this flying hotel would not have the capacity to take us all the way into Mexico City.



Allah save us! We are going to crash!

We'll be all right, Khandy. There's an entire desert for us to set down in!

It may be a long walk to divorce court . . . but at least we're going to be safe!



Yohr yonkee greengo amigos hov feelled yohr preety head weeth nonsense, my leetle coctus flowar!

What you need ees a healthy dose ov huemeeleety! What you say, compadres?

Let me geev her my dose!

Sil! Geev her a dose she not soon for-get!

No, mine!



Say! What do we have here? It looks like a party!

Madre mios! Ees nahked weemen!

Eet cahn't be!

Ees massive case of sun-strike! We all halving a meerage!



Oooh! These ees one mirage weeth nice, firm jaloodies!

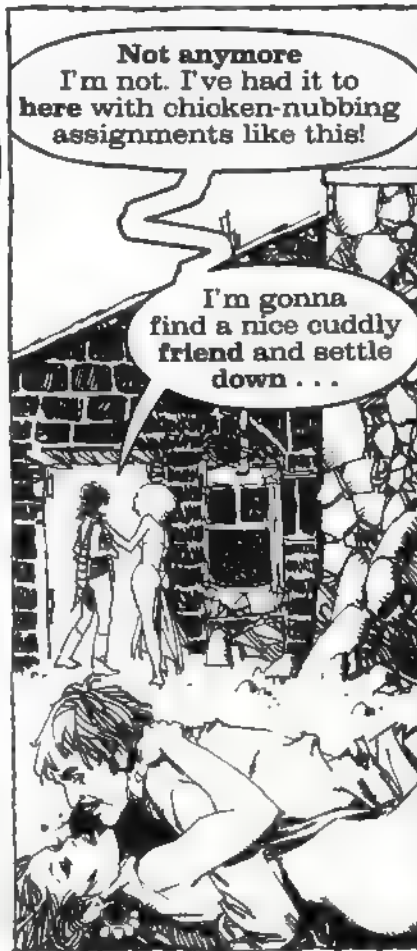
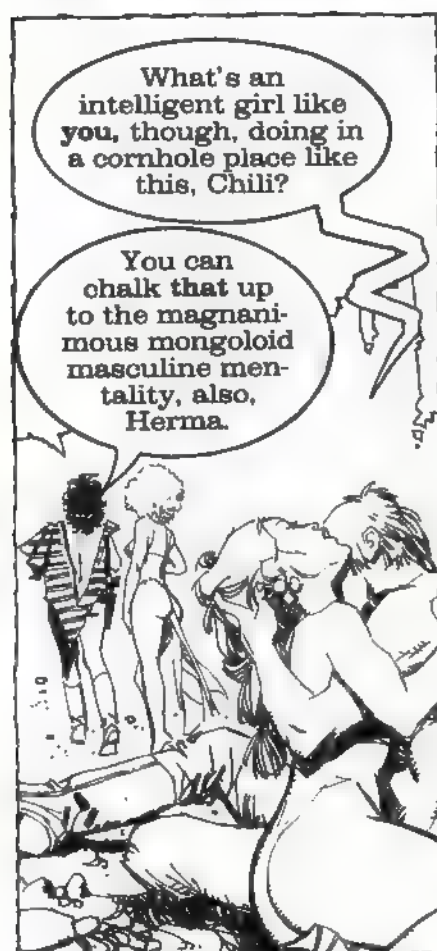
Say . . . you one hot chihuahua! You wanna come see Pedro's eetchings?

Oh, I simply adore etchings!

Not etchings! Eetchings! Like een bog bites!

Ees too bod, my leetle chiquita pepper. Eet looks like you weel now holf to stand een line ot thee poms for yohr lubricahtion.

It does not take long for introductions and for the ex-concubines and the bawdy banditos to realize that they have almost **nothing** in common. Yet, that seems to matter little, for each has found a **minor diversion** with which to keep him or herself pleasantly preoccupied.

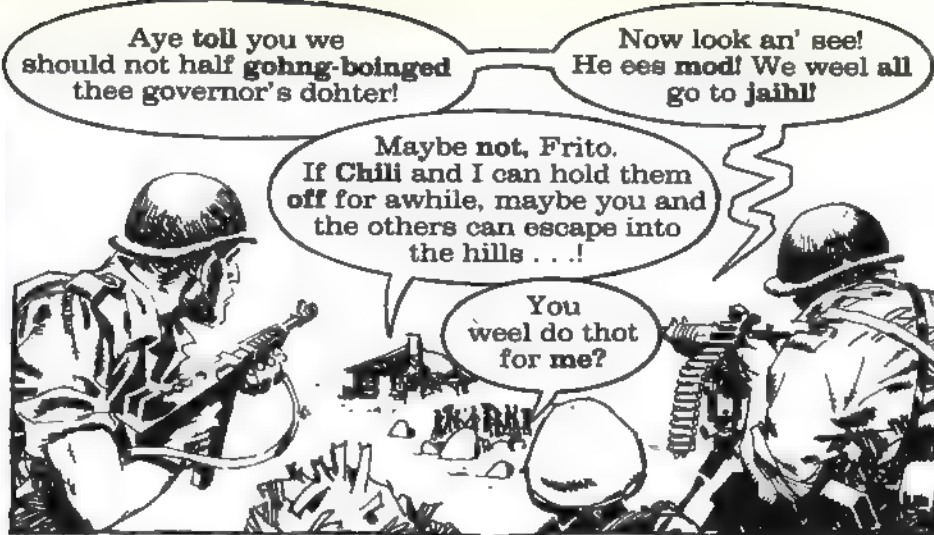


The lingering moments are pleasant, but pass all too swiftly when a rickety, toothless bandit storms through the encampment sounding a call to arms.



Federales! Federales! They sooround thee comp!

They come to take oos all to preeson!



Aye toll you we should not half gohng-boinged thee governor's dohter!

Now look an' see! He ees mod! We weel all go to jaihl!

Maybe not, Frito. If Chili and I can hold them off for awhile, maybe you and the others can escape into the hills...

You weel do thot for me?



Well... no! But I would for Khandy and the other girls.

Oh, Herma...! We will never forget you. You have changed all of our lives. And when we have castrated Ali Khan Sade in court, we will bronze his meager manhood in your honor!



Ready, Butch?

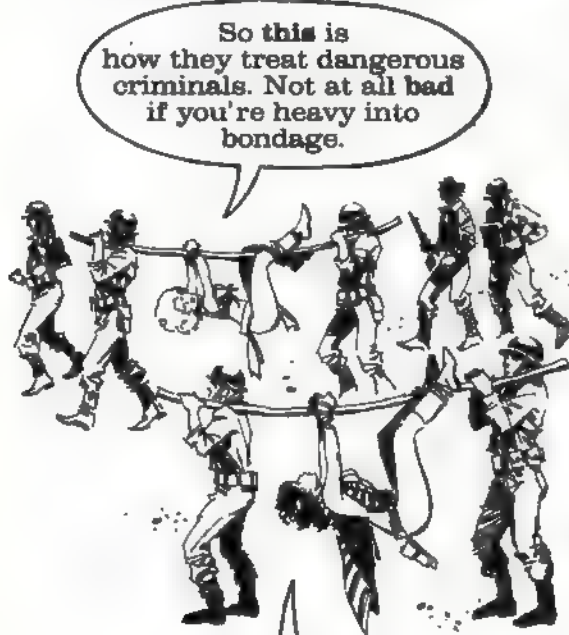
As I'll ever be, Sundance. Let's give 'em hell!



Er... it might be a little late to mention this, Chili...! But I just remembered, I don't know how to work one of these things.

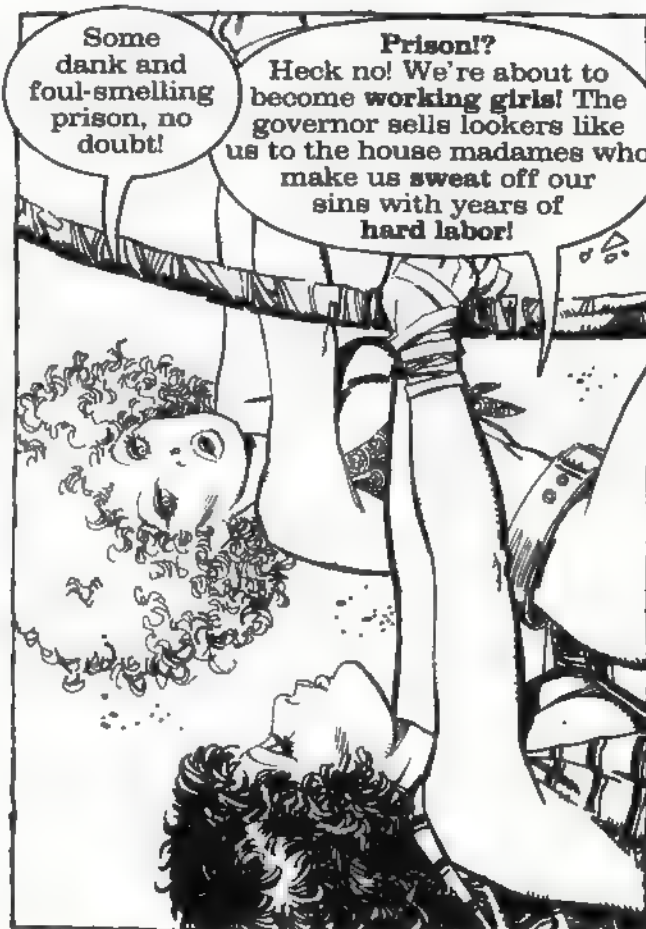
Hmmmmmm! That could be a problem, Herm. Despite being weaned on TV westerns, I haven't the faintest idea how they work, either!

Needless to say, the battle is swiftly lost without firing a shot.



So this is how they treat dangerous criminals. Not at all bad if you're heavy into bondage.

If you think this is a million laughs, just wait till you see where they're taking us!



Some dank and foul-smelling prison, no doubt!

Prison!? Heck no! We're about to become working girls! The governor sells lookers like us to the house madames who make us sweat off our sins with years of hard labor!



I would have told you sooner, but I didn't want you going over the hill on me!

Mmmmmmm! Are you kidding? It's a fate that sounds simply divine!

It is sometime later when Herma and Chili are delivered into the hands of their keeper, a veritable wall of a woman calling herself simply, Warden!

We've got two new ones for you, Warden. Governor wants **eighty percent** of the action on these little love boxes. They're **choice, prime double grade A!**

Very well. Leave them with me.

Eighty percent!? It's **blackmail!** I'll have to work them night and day just to meet the over-head . . .!

The guard departs, commending the girls into the hands of their brutish overseer.

Listen up, ladies. We run an **exclusive operation** here, catering to only the **finest clientele.**

You will at all times be pleasant, courteous and overwhelmingly **enthralled** by your suitors!

And you **should**, if all goes well, be out of here in **ten to twenty years!**

Meanwhile, on her Majesty's Golden Isles, the eminent **Professor Sir Robert Draftstree-Battlesberry**, head of the famous expedition which discovered the **Viking Princess hibernating** within a thousand-year-old block of ice, plays host to an eager young member of **Her Majesty's Secret Service.**

I do so wish to be of service to you, old bean, but I know nothing more of Herma's disappearance other than what I have told you.

I needn't tell you, professor, how very **important** Herma is to this nation's welfare.

She has become a **national treasure**, and unless we find her immediately, there's apt to be a **row** unlike any heard since the Queen Mother misplaced the royal diaphragm.

Your **bleedin' row** bedamned, Mr. Bolt! I care more for the **girl** than for the righteous indignation of the common proletariat!

It was not in her nature to pick up and **vanish** without so much as a "by your leave."

I tell you, sir, Herma was **abducted** from these premises by person or persons unknown whose intent is quite obviously **morally malicious!**

And if you were not so bloody busy sitting upon your bum, lecherously **ogling** other, equally delectable lascivious, your department would be one of the first to **realize it!**

We are not without our **resources**, Sir Robert.

However, even if this **Ali Khan Sade** is the kidnapping culprit in question, we cannot simply **charge** into his quaint little fiefdom like a horde of **slavering savages.**

We have a **plan**, sir. But it requires **another** delightful morsel, equally as enticing as **Herma!**

Indeed, even now, we are quietly investigating one **Ali Khan Sade**, an avid collector of **lubricious** treasures like your Herma.

The cool night air is like springtime in the Mexican wilds, stirring a man's passions, turning his fancy towards lubriciously philandering pastimes.

What's the matter, hot lips? Don't you see anything to tickle your fancy tonight?

Madame, it has been veritable eons since you've augmented your estimable but ultimately familiar fare with a palatable tidbit worthy of a connoisseur of libidinous discretions.

Got a yen for some fresh flesh, eh, lover boy?

For once you're in luck. I've received a new shipment only this afternoon. Two of the finest, (and, I might add, most expensive) pieces of merchandise old Mother Warden has ever had the pleasure of offering.

Caramba! They are angelic visions!

Screw the cost! I'll take both of them!

N-n-not so f-fast! W-w-whatever the asking p-p-price, I'll d-d-double it for the r-r-redhead!

As financial transactions are made, the girls are sent to their room to await their soon-to-becoming clientele!

It is a pity that mine is such an obese boor. If nothing else it will be an experience!

Herma!! You're not going to stand for this?!

I've never done it with a lardpile before!

I have always believed that we were placed upon this world to enjoy ourselves, Chili. How can you not enjoy giving pleasure to another human being?

Giving pleasure is one thing. But letting the slimy slug hump my brains out isn't my idea of a fun time!

Then maybe you can find some use for this. A wise old woman... my mother... once told me that no self-respecting girl should ever be without one!

It... it's a bulb of garlic. I don't understand.

Not mere garlic. Norwegian skunk garlic. Simply chew on a clove for awhile and I guarantee your virtue will not be compromised for a month!

Gentlemen... have an enjoyable evening. And please, do try to leave as few whip scars and leather burns as possible!

Ohhhhhh, mah Chhhherie! Hhhhhhow my thighs cryhhhhout for your puhhhlsating, throbbing manhhhhhood!

Gak!

Come, my plumply empassioned paramour! Let us baste this sacred union with the oleaginous essence of your love!

Herma and her unctuous suitor repair to the plush seclusion of an adjoining room!

You seem awfully nervous, lover. Don't be. I'm as new to this as you seem to be. But I'll try to make it as painless as possible!

By the way . . . what's your name? I usually like to be on a first name basis with my lovers.

M-M-Milton! Milton J. Krebs! But . . . but you've g-g-got it wrong! I'm n-n-not new at this, I-I-It's what I do for a l-l-living!

H-H-Hello, M-M-Moth-!

Y-Y-Y-Yes, it . . . it's M-M-Miltie!

I . . . I've f-f-found you a n-n-new-!

Sh-Sh-She's g-g-gorgeo-!

I-I-I-!

Y-Y-Yes, m-mother!

No dice with mother, eh, Miltie?

Well I'll be! A professional john! I didn't know there was such a thing.

N-N-N-No! I-I-I'm a talent s-scout f-f-f-for K-K-K-Krebs International P-P-Pictures!

M-M-Mother runs the c-c-company! I just f-f-find the t-t-t-talent!

M-M-Mother used to r-r-run a house like this herself . . . y-y-y-years ago!

I-I-It's how she got s-started in the f-f-f-film industry!

M-M-Maybe you've s-s-seen some of her early w-w-w-works. "L-L-Little Mary's Stallion," "B-B-Becky and the B-B-Bears," and of c-c-course . . . "S-S-Sally's Salacious Serpent!"

Er, no . . . I can't say that I have, Miltie. But they certainly sound like interesting viewing.

D-D-Do you think y-y-you m-might be i-interested in a f-f-film career, Herma? M-M-Mother could simply do w-w-wonders with a face such as y-y-yours!

It's a most generous offer . . . but I'm contractually bound for the next twenty years. If you want to wait, though-!

O-O-Oh poo! M-M-Mother always says that c-c-c-contracts are m-m-meant to be b-b-b-broken!

J-J-Just let me c-c-call her. I'm s-s-sure she'll get on it r-r-right away!

H-H-Hello, M-M-Moth-!

Y-Y-Y-Yes, it . . . it's M-M-Miltie!

I . . . I've f-f-found you a n-n-new-!

Sh-Sh-She's g-g-gorgeo-!

I-I-I-!

Y-Y-Yes, m-mother!

No dice with mother, eh, Miltie?

Ohhhh . . .

M-M-Mother t-t-trusts m-m-me implicitly. Sh-Sh-She says that e-e-every time a g-g-girl m-makes m-m-me st-stutter, she m-m-makes a million for M-M-Mother!

S-S-So, Herma . . . y-y-you're going to be a st-st-star!

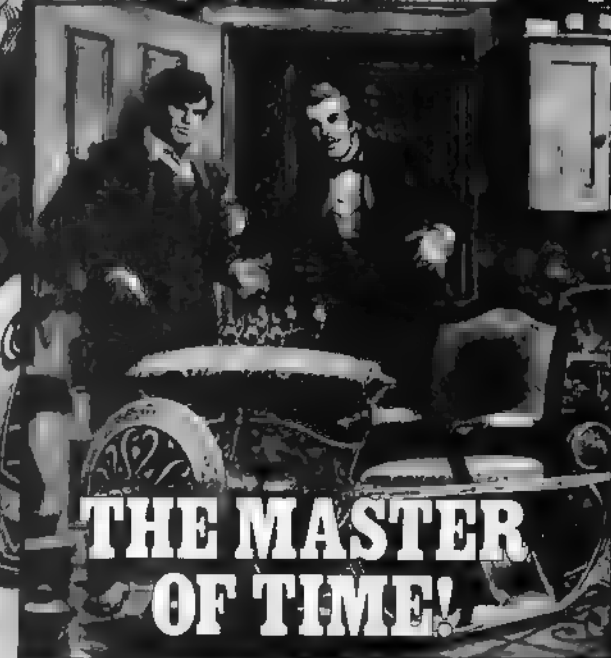
Herma continues in the next issue of 1984.

**THE NEW WARREN AGE
OF EXCITEMENT HAS ARRIVED!**

**IN THE ALL-NEW ADVENTURE-PACKED
MAGAZINE!**

The ROOK

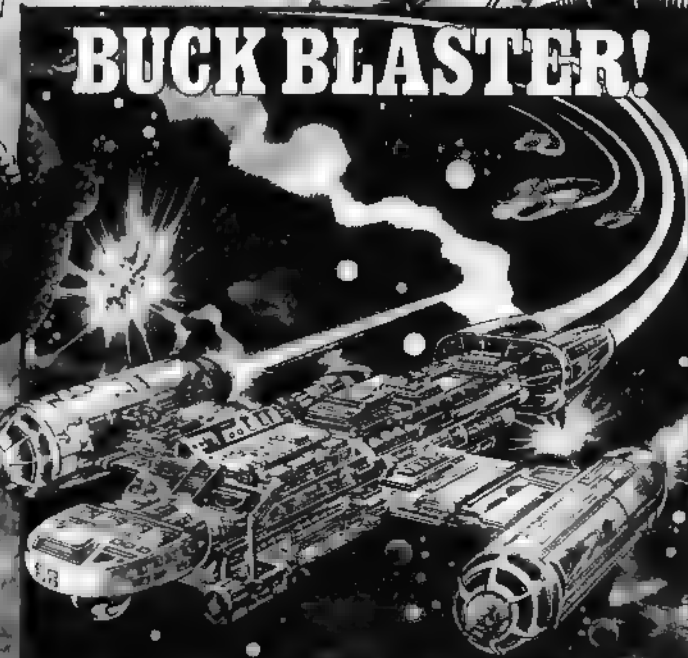
FEATURING:



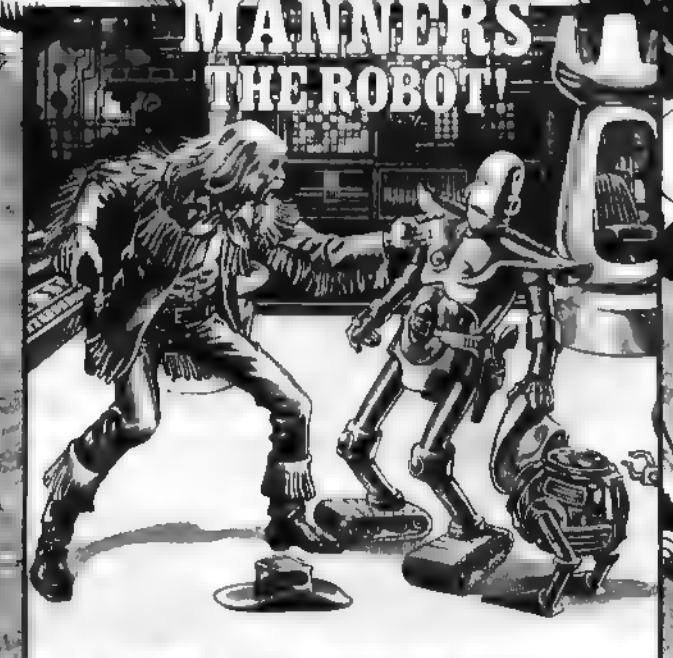
**THE MASTER
OF TIME!**



BOLT



BUCK BLASTER!

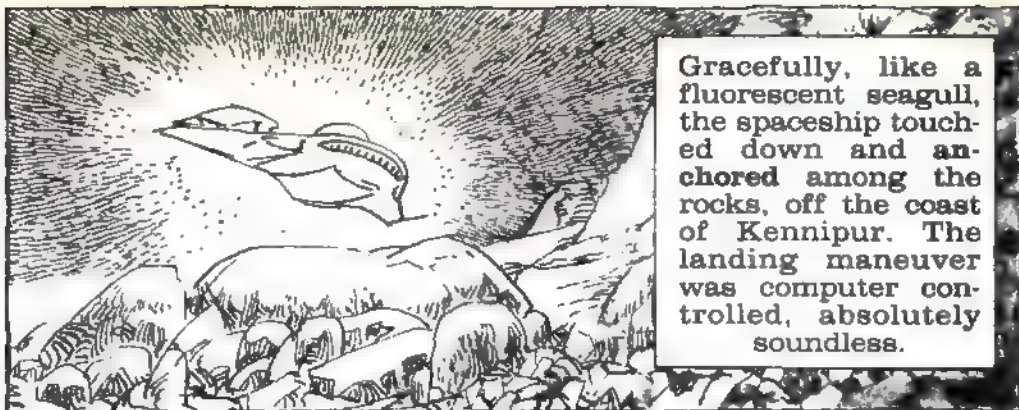


**MANNERS
THE ROBOT!**

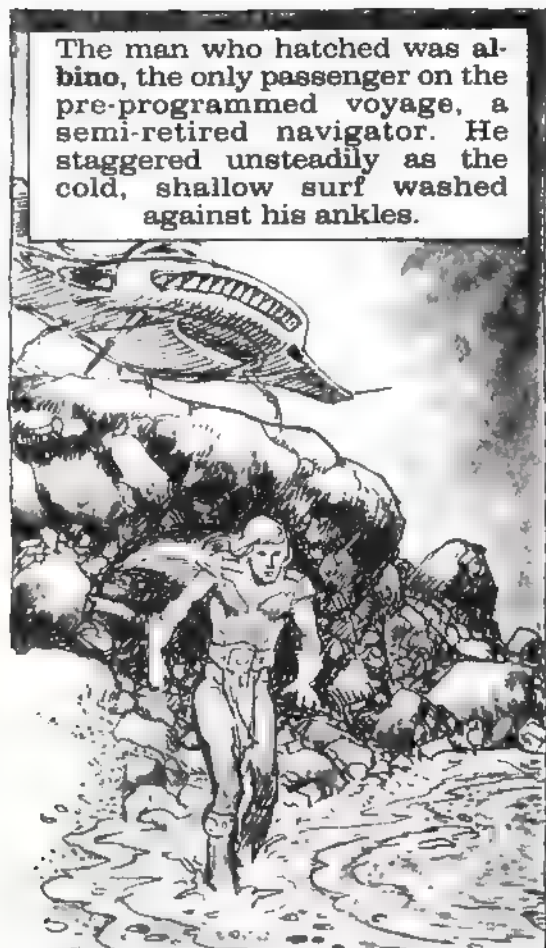
AT NEWS STANDS EVERYWHERE...

...AUGUST 1st

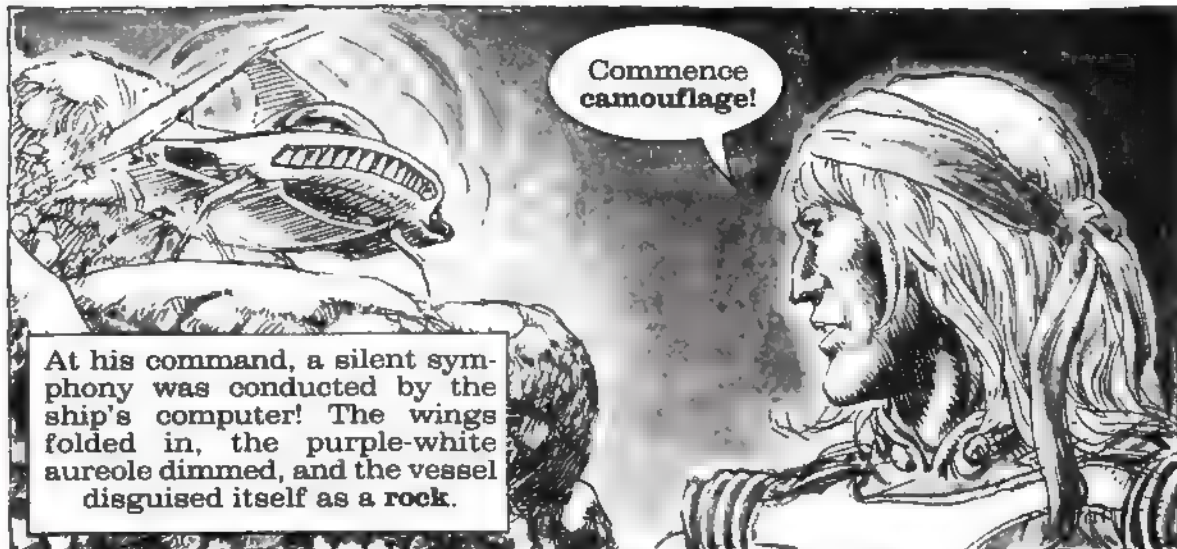
A CLEAR **and** PRESENT DANGER!



Gracefully, like a fluorescent seagull, the spaceship touched down and anchored among the rocks, off the coast of Kennipur. The landing maneuver was computer controlled, absolutely soundless.



The man who hatched was albino, the only passenger on the pre-programmed voyage, a semi-retired navigator. He staggered unsteadily as the cold, shallow surf washed against his ankles.



Commence camouflage!

At his command, a silent symphony was conducted by the ship's computer! The wings folded in, the purple-white aureole dimmed, and the vessel disguised itself as a rock.



Beyond the beach were the gardens and orchards. While the Albino squirmed through, crushing and squishing several exquisite plants, he maintained telepathic contact with the mothership computer.

As he walked the length of the beach, the water followed him, filling in and dissolving his footprints.

Intelligence: Coastal vegetation plentiful, so plump it's erotic. The hues are particularly vivid and intense. It looks almost artificial.

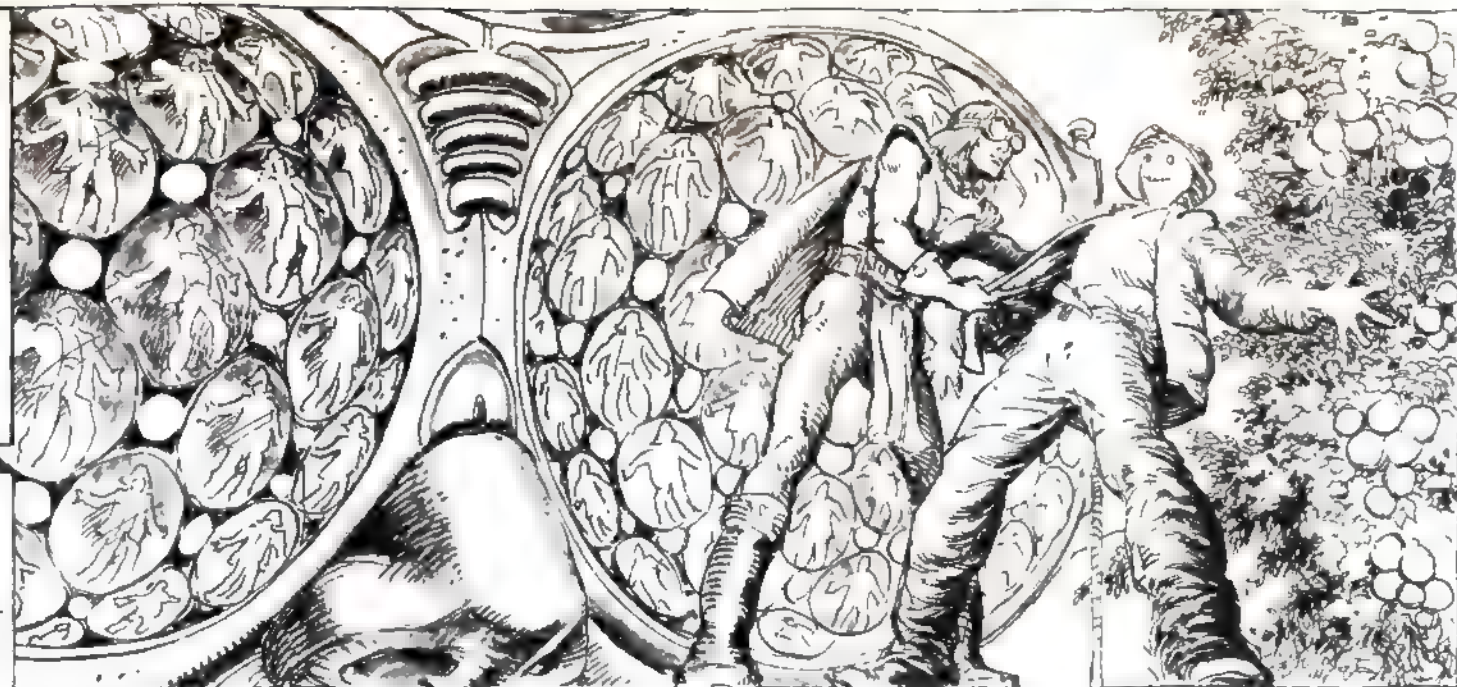
Concurs with pre-recorded data.

The Albino fit his spectacles over his forehead, adjusted the range to seventy ketros, and pivoted slowly, memorizing every detail of the landscape.

Something stirred. He focused for maximum magnification. It was only a cat, pissing.

Deeper in the garden, a synthetic scarecrow was securely rooted. Stimulated by solar energy stored during daylight hours, the mannequin broadcasted ultra-sonic vibrations that accelerated the dispersement of birds and small pack animals.

The navigator considered its clothing. While not the finest, it was less conspicuous than what he was wearing.



Carefully, he lifted the pen-lite maser from his own garments. He hoped he wouldn't need it.

He'd come here to prevent a life, not take one. Though he wasn't sure there was a difference.

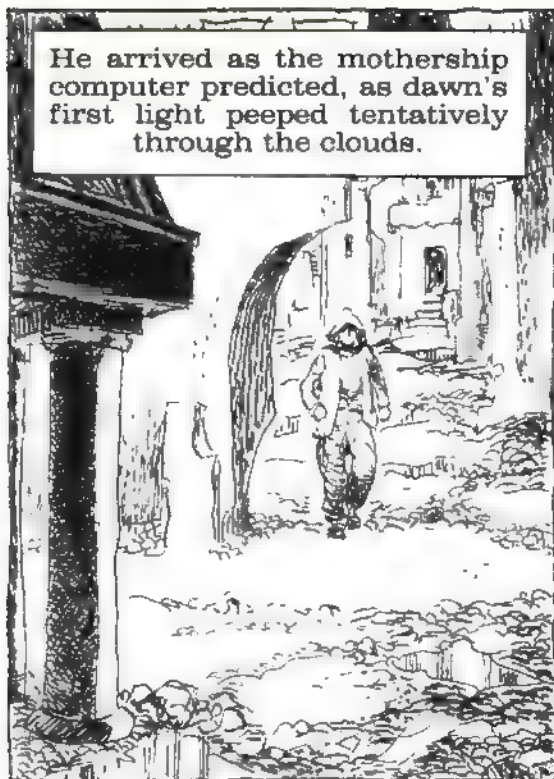
Question: how far to the Acropolis?

You'll be there before daybreak. I'll direct you.



The Acropolis was a federally funded housing project for the migrant workers, mostly refugees and expatriates, who tended the agricultural reserve, the gardens and hot-houses beyond the dome.





He arrived as the mothership computer predicted, as dawn's first light peeped tentatively through the clouds.



You will find Lisa Bourbon inside. May I point out that an expedient and permanent settlement of the situation requires—!

Go fuck yourself, computer!

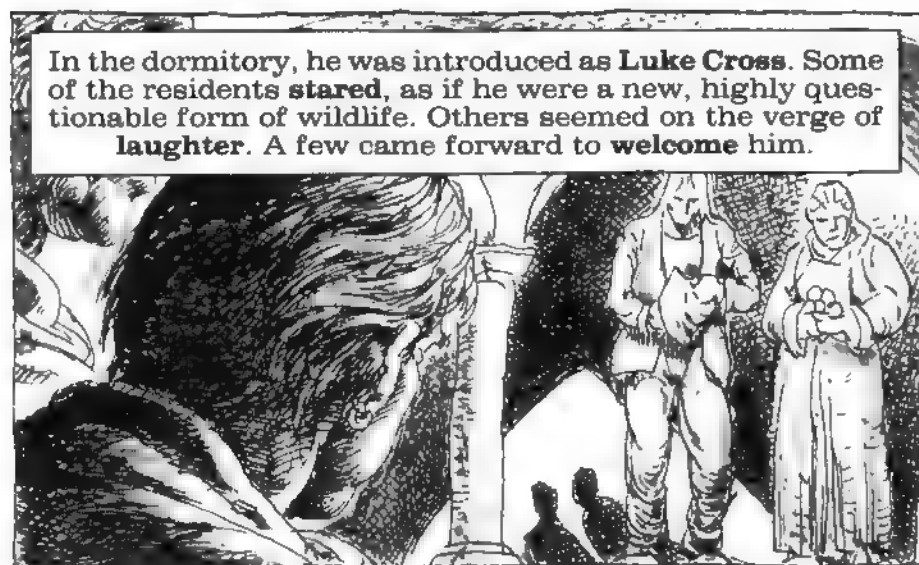
Command illogical. Reject.



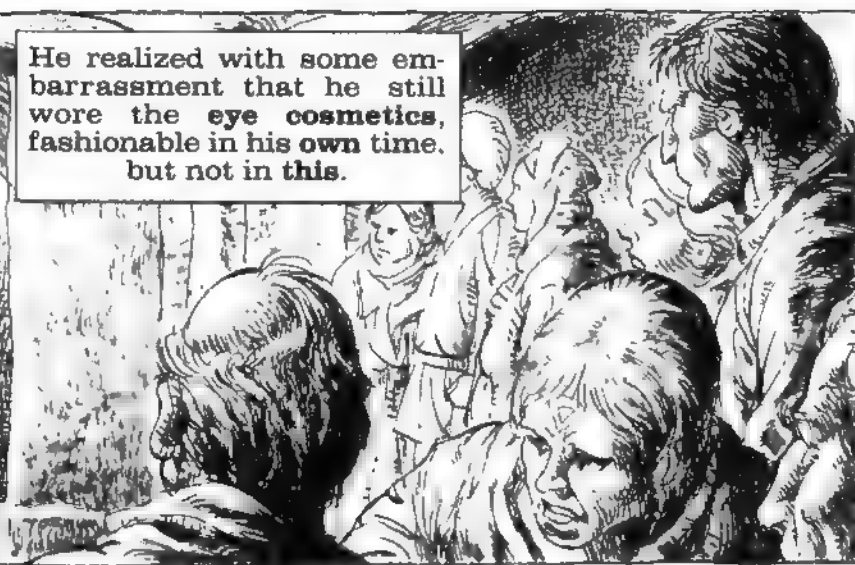
He knocked. Not immediately, but soon enough, he heard stirrings within; people waking, stretching, listening for a repetition of whatever real or imaginary sound which had disturbed them.

I need a place to bunk. I have no money, but I have these.

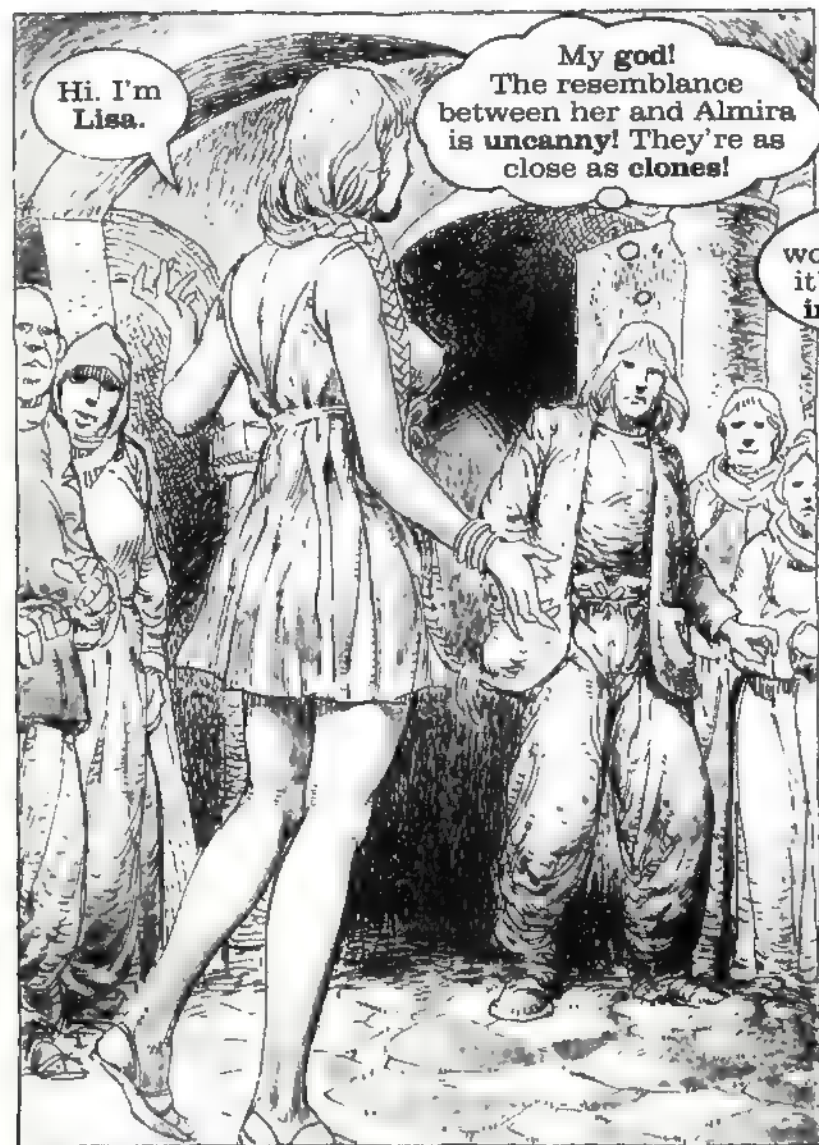
Then welcome, friend.



In the dormitory, he was introduced as **Luke Cross**. Some of the residents **stared**, as if he were a new, highly questionable form of wildlife. Others seemed on the verge of **laughter**. A few came forward to **welcome** him.



He realized with some embarrassment that he still wore the **eye cosmetics**, fashionable in his own time, but not in **this**.

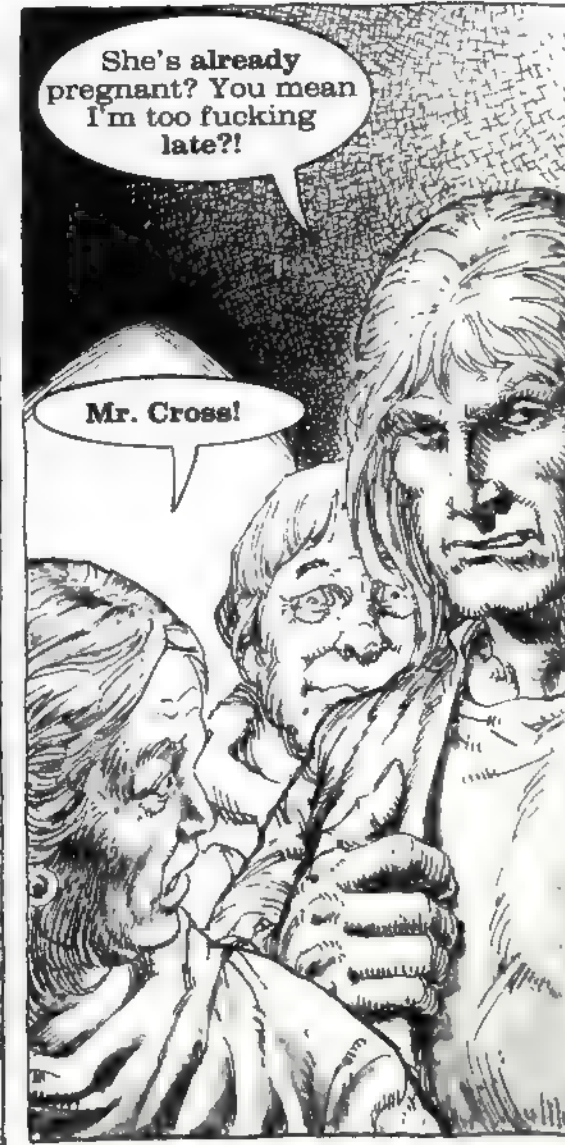


Hi. I'm Lisa.

My god! The resemblance between her and Almira is **uncanny**! They're as close as clones!

Suddenly, the girl clamped her hand over her mouth. The navigator watched in confused horror as the girl **retched** and **gagged**.

Nothing to worry about... it's just **morning sickness**!

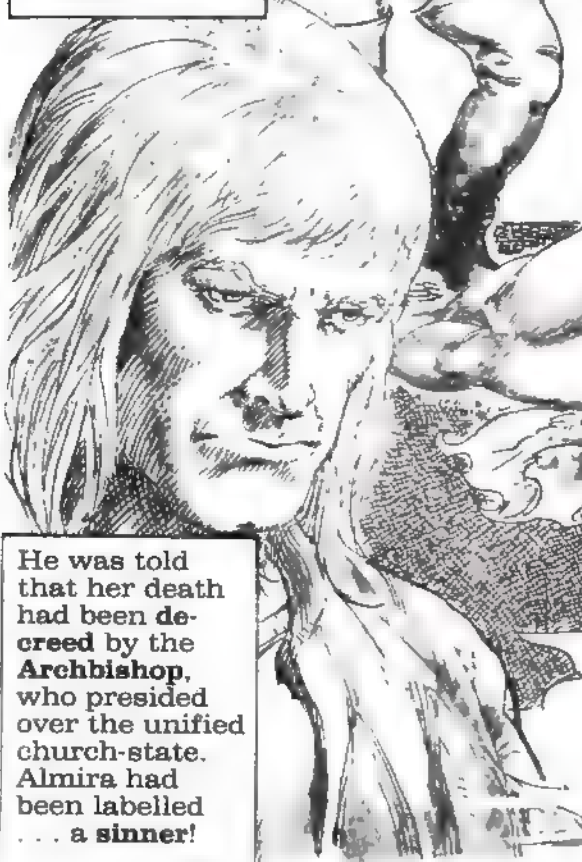


She's already pregnant? You mean I'm too fucking late?!

Mr. Cross!

Later in the morning, he and Lisa went walking. Mentally, Luke had striven to maintain a pragmatic, hard-lined attitude, but this was fast faltering.

His thoughts fled back to the events which had brought him here. He'd returned home after a long voyage, hungering for Almira's warm, delicious body. Instead found her cold and lifeless.

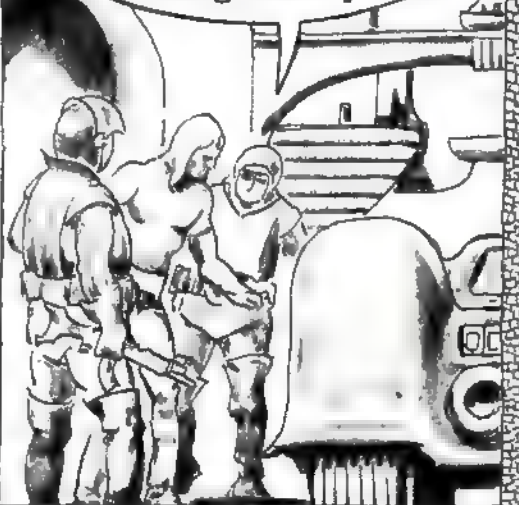


He was told that her death had been decreed by the Archbishop, who presided over the unified church-state. Almira had been labelled ... a sinner!



I'll see that son of a bitch in hell!

We have a better idea, one that will rid us all of the Archbishop ... and restore your beloved wife. All you have to do is change history!



Luke neither liked nor trusted the military, but he'd no choice other than to hear them out. They were trusted advisors, confidants of the Archbishop. They were the judases who'd established him as a political marionette ...

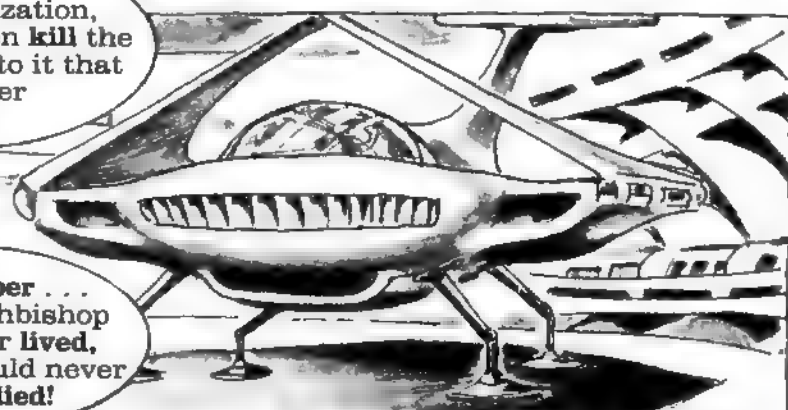
... and now that he'd usurped their power, they wanted him out. Permanently! Not only dead, but never even born!

Do whatever's necessary ... sterilization, coitus interruptus, even kill the partners ... ! But see to it that the child is never delivered!

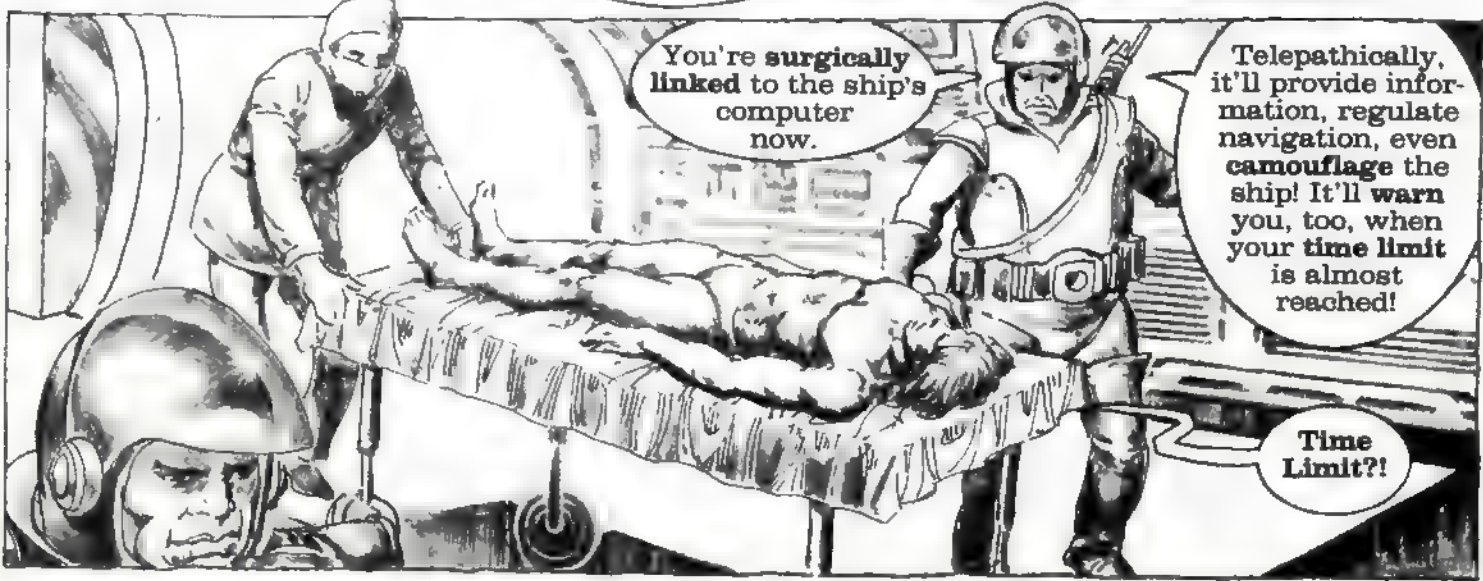
Remember ... if the Archbishop had never lived, Almira would never have died!

The time machine had been constructed at a secret military installation which even the Archbishop was unaware of.

Your voyage will be computer controlled. You'll go back to the approximate time and place of conception.



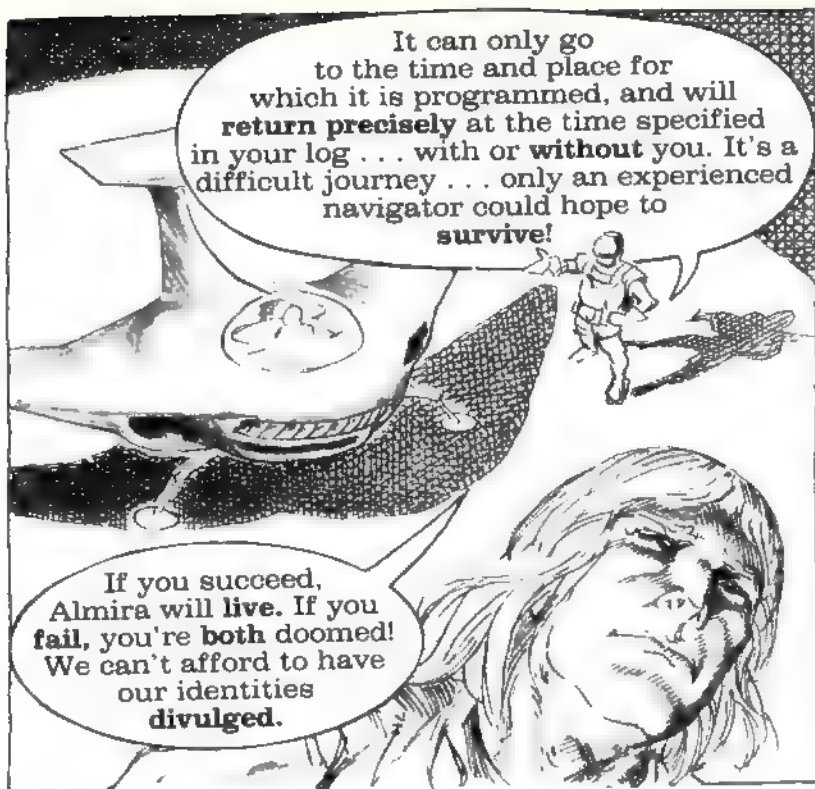
As they prepared the navigator for his voyage, he began to have thoughts of his own. Perhaps the Archbishop hadn't decreed Almira's death after all. Maybe these lying cocksuckers had pumped her just to ensure his cooperation. It didn't really matter, he knew. They had the only means to bring her back!



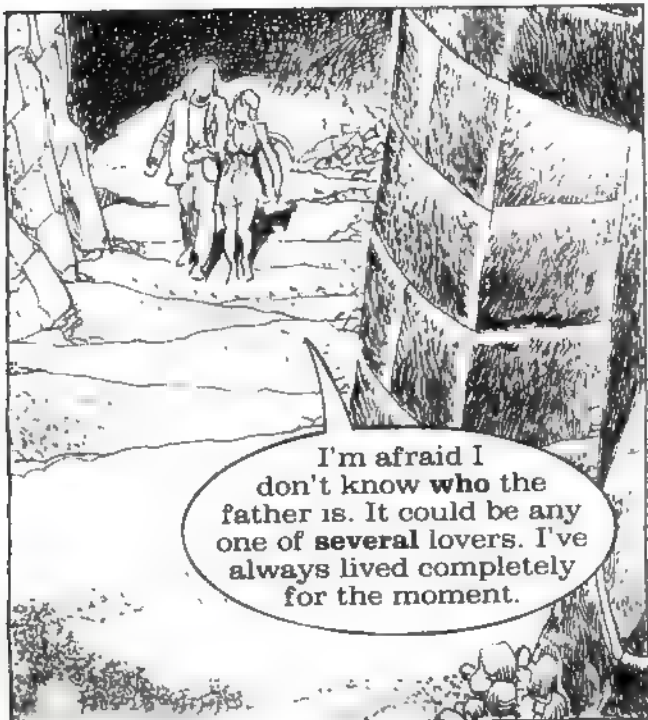
You're surgically linked to the ship's computer now.

Telepathically, it'll provide information, regulate navigation, even camouflage the ship! It'll warn you, too, when your time limit is almost reached!

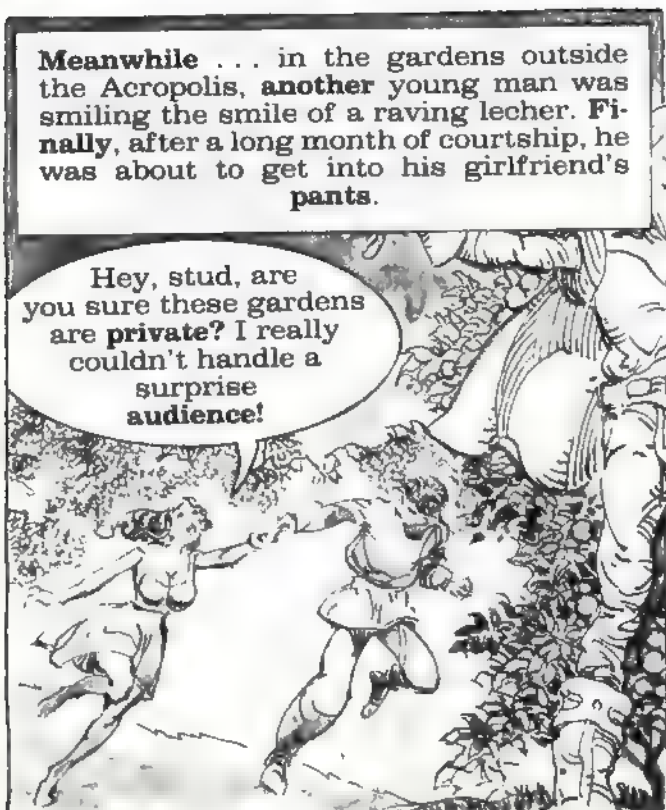
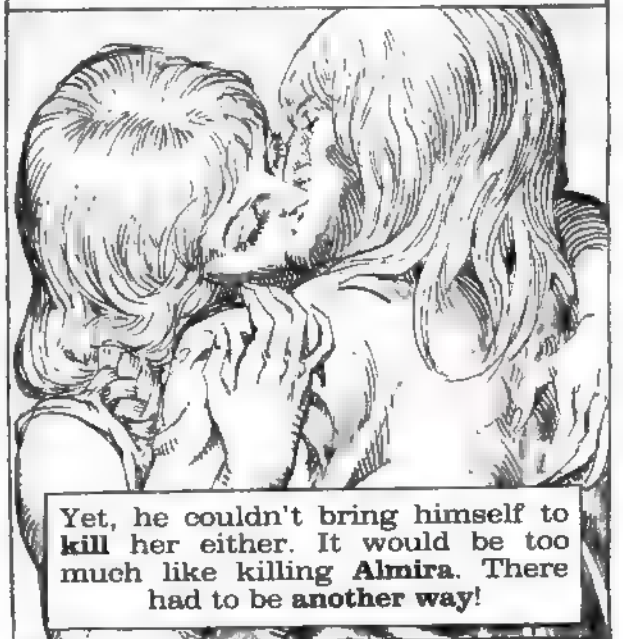
Time Limit?!



Luke wasn't concerned over the woman's misinterpretation of his words. His thoughts were fifty years in the future which was also, ironically . . . his past.



For a moment, Luke considered forgetting the mission and staying with Lisa. But although she was young, beautiful, and candid, and looked so very much like Almira, she couldn't take the place of an experienced and very deeply loved wife!





Woman,
have you no
mercy?



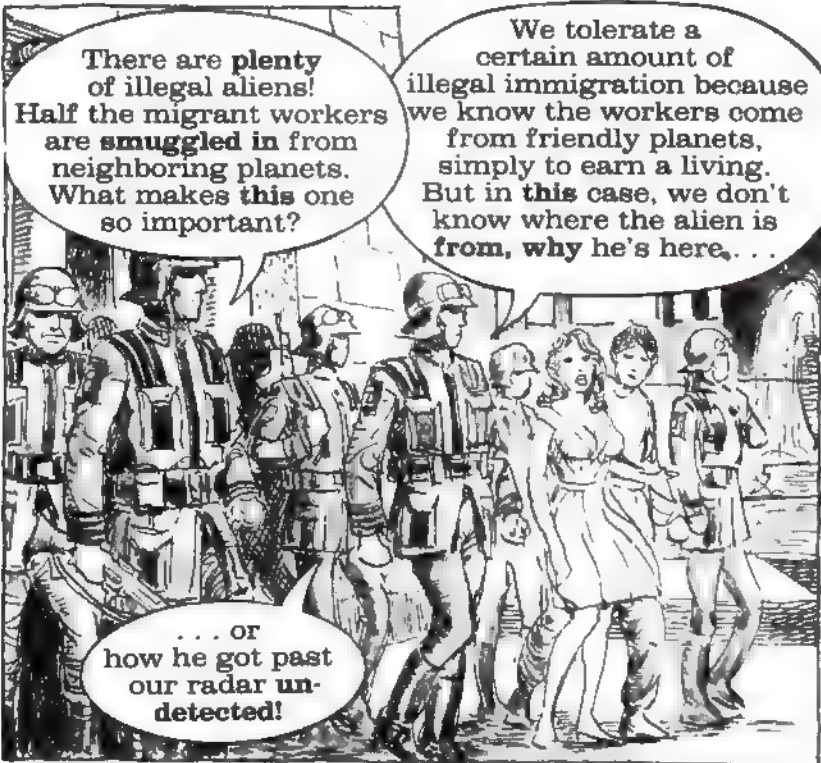
Fryd, something
... someone's been out
here. Maybe we should
report this to the
authorities.

All right.
But afterwards
... okay!?



Later, after
the couple has
brought their
discovery to
the attention
of the Federal
Security Force
...!

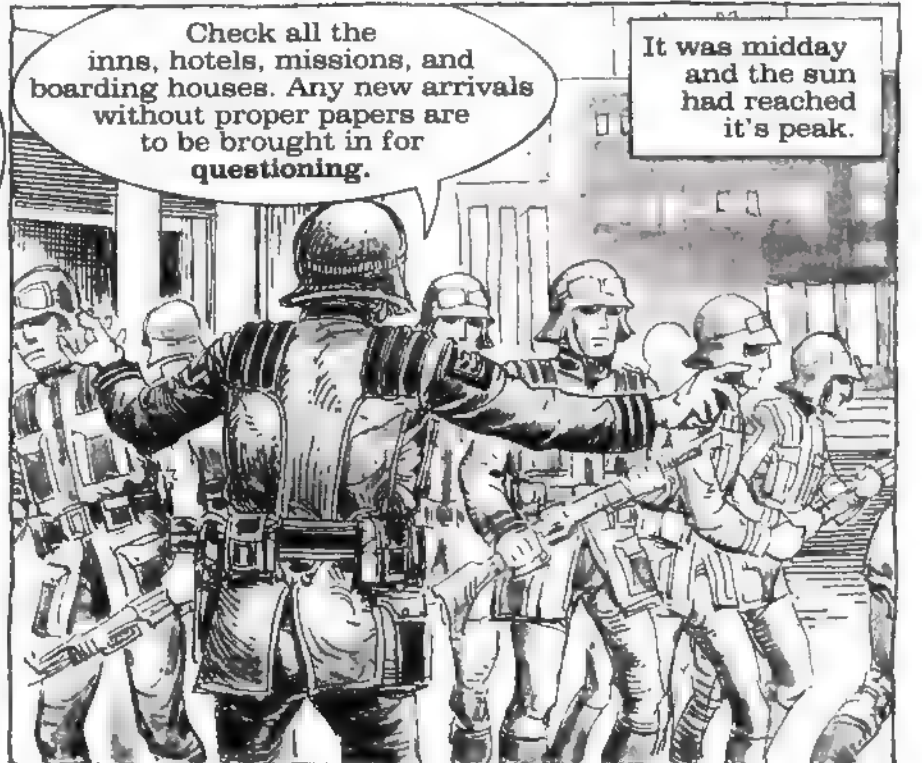
This lab report
confirms it. The clothing
was made from a material not
found on earth. There's an
illegal alien in
our midst!



There are plenty
of illegal aliens!
Half the migrant workers
are smuggled in from
neighboring planets.
What makes this one
so important?

We tolerate a
certain amount of
illegal immigration because
we know the workers come
from friendly planets,
simply to earn a living.
But in this case, we don't
know where the alien is
from, why he's here, ...

... or
how he got past
our radar un-
detected!



Check all the
inns, hotels, missions, and
boarding houses. Any new arrivals
without proper papers are
to be brought in for
questioning.

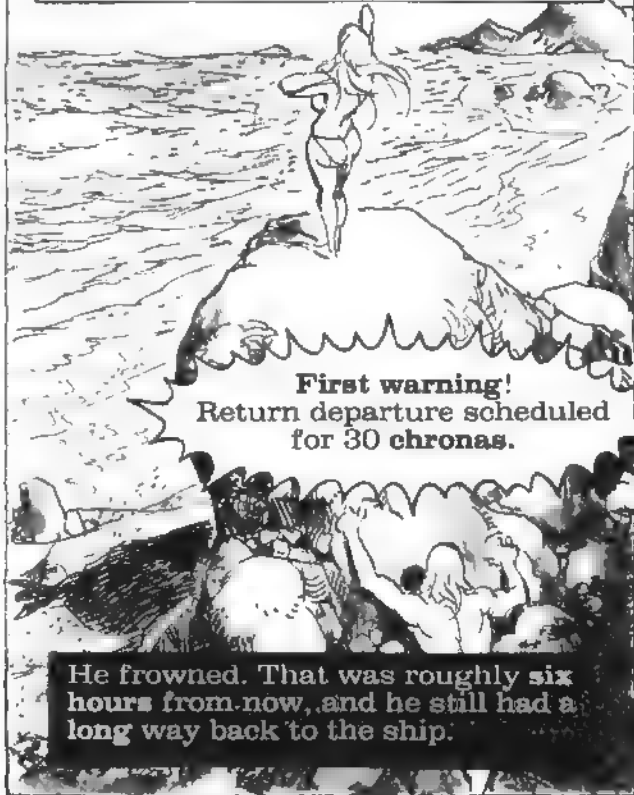
It was midday
and the sun
had reached
it's peak.



Lisa and the Time-Sailor
swam in a small cove beyond
the hothouses. Frequently,
the mothership computer re-
minded him that he could
complete his mission now, by
taking this opportunity to
drown Lisa.

He blocked out the sugges-
tion.

Luke had already made up his mind. Somehow, somehow, he would arrange a miscarriage for the girl. The Archbishop would be lost, but Lisa and Almira would both survive. It was just a question of the right time, the proper method . . . !



First warning!
Return departure scheduled
for 30 chronas.

He frowned. That was roughly six hours from now, and he still had a long way back to the ship.

Meanwhile . . . !

Yes, a man named Luke Cross arrived only this morning. I didn't ask for his papers. Right now I believe he's out at the cove with Lisa.



I'd better have a talk with him. The Director always gets a little nervous when our security systems are breached.

At first, when the security officer found Luke's clothing, he felt silly.



With my luck, I'll catch them fucking on the beach and we'll all be embarrassed.

When he found the strange, kaleidoscopic spectacles tucked into an inner pocket, his attitude changed.



Well, what do you know!

The time-sailor was a man who recognized opportunity when he saw it. Lisa was enchanted by the sea, oblivious to the rest of her surroundings.



The drop was perhaps six feet . . . certainly not enough to kill her. But as for the baby . . . well, the world didn't really need another religious zealot anyway!

Then it all came together.

Luke . . . what . . . what are you doing . . . ?

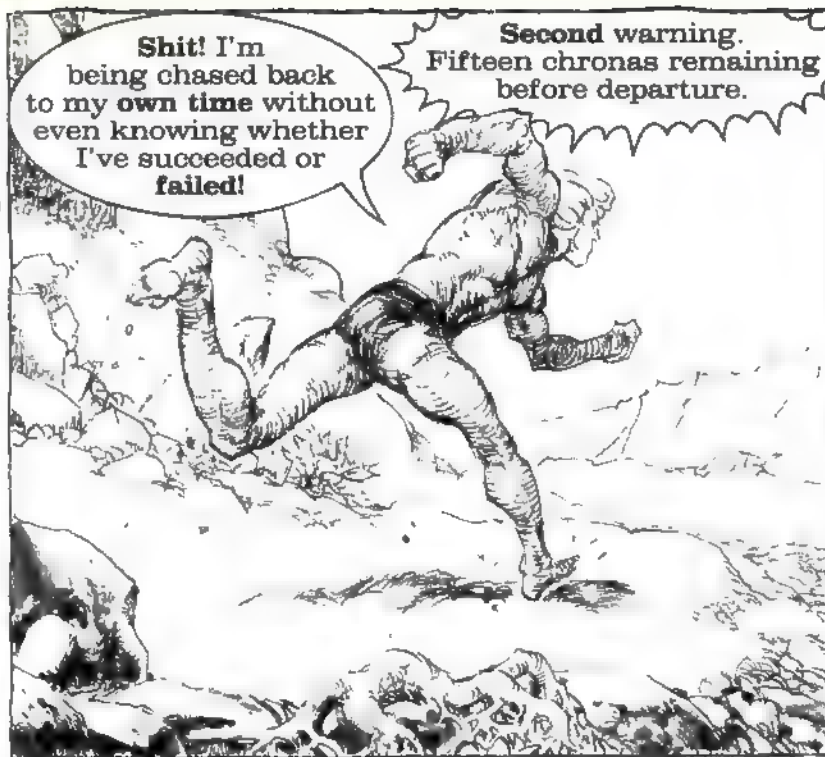


Nooooo!



I-I'm all right, but god . . . my . . . my baby!

H-He seemed so nice . . . he must've been a madman!



Shit! I'm being chased back to my own time without even knowing whether I've succeeded or failed!

Second warning. Fifteen chronas remaining before departure.

The fugitive's description was instantaneously flashed to all Federal Security personnel. The manhunt began in earnest. They used aircraft, animals, ground-troops, electronic tracking devices . . . all the technology and manpower at their command.

Even with his course mapped out by the computer, it was a quarter of a day's walk to the shore where the time ship was moored. Hiding, dodging search parties, airborne shuttlecraft, and what not, it could take forever!



Hours later, they still hadn't caught him.



Third Alert: Eight chronas remaining. Suggest all possible haste.

I'm comin' . . . I'm comin'!



There he is!

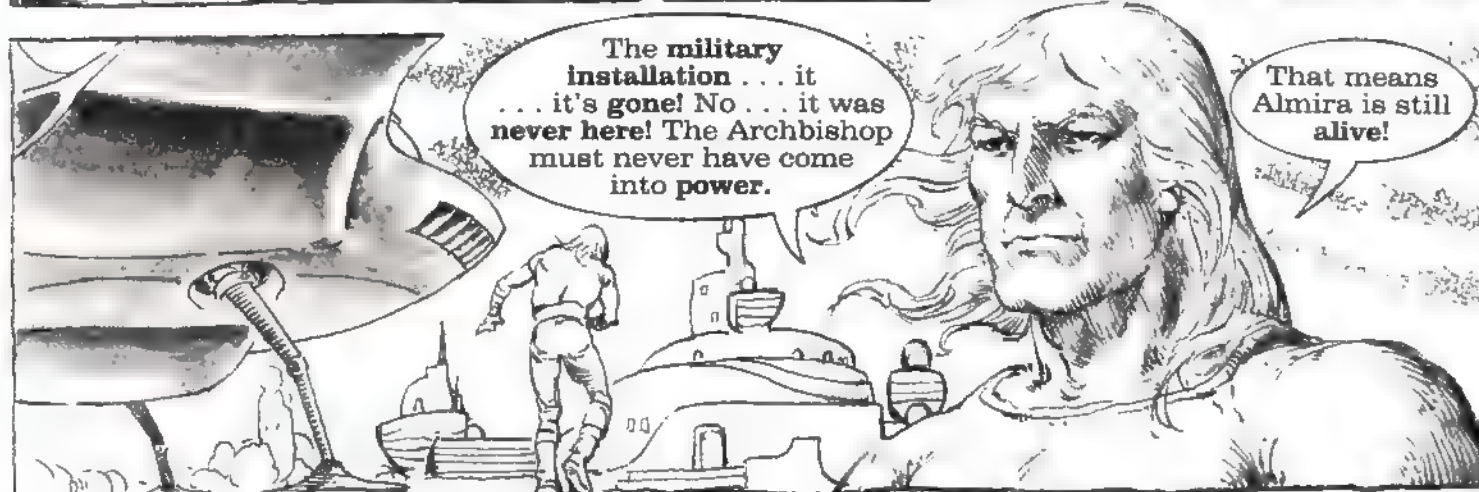
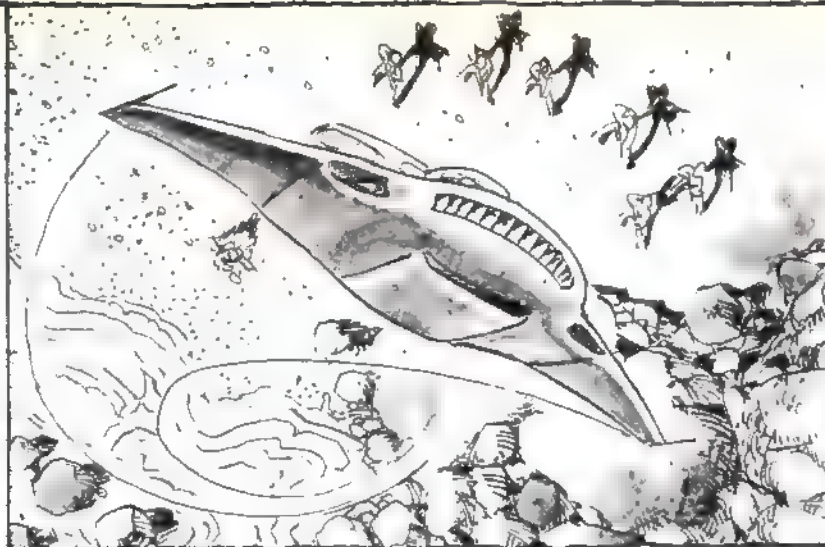
Stop him!

Don't let him get away!

As Luke crossed the final stretch of beach, it seemed that the soft sand under his feet was trying to hold him back . . . to suck him down. The Federals were close behind. They'd spotted him . . . and he had only two chronas left.



The timeship swiftly cast off... right on schedule... piloted by a navigator who may or may not have changed history and resurrected the dead. Had he succeeded? He wouldn't know until he'd arrived safely back in his own time!



That means Almira is still alive!

Luke could see no way in which the Archbishop could have influenced the purchase of his home. He felt reasonably certain that the house stood where it always had. He ran towards it, his heart pounding.

There was, however, one serious and unforeseen alteration. What it came down to is this: years ago, the Archbishop had purchased several thousand ketros of land—in the name of the church, of course—evacuating the families who lived there.

It was as a result of that minor exodus that Almira had met her future husband.



Here, in the world he'd made, they'd never met at all! Instead Luke had married a longtime friend who he had never really loved, during his autumn years when he couldn't afford to be all that selective.

He wondered about Almira, about the kind of life she was living. He wondered about the military men, too. Had they gotten the power they craved? Were there others without wives or jobs because of what he'd done? And how exactly did all these changes occur?




What about the time machine and the computer? How is it they still existed when in this world they'd never even been created? Could they be used again? Questions swam through Luke's head like darting schools of fish. Most of them went without answers.



Already he had undone a civilization, sacrificing two women in the process. He was tired, depressed and wanted desperately to rest.

Yet, somehow he knew, there would be no rest for a long, long time to come!



The first time I laid eyes on Steamer Starfire, he was knee-high to a Vesuvian Parblob and full of the same piss and vinegar which so characterized his old man.

There's Squad Leader Becker's signal, Colonel. The fighters are ready for simulated combat.

Sam Starfire and I passed through the Peacemakers Academy together in '97. Back in the peaceable times . . . before they opened the galactic frontier.

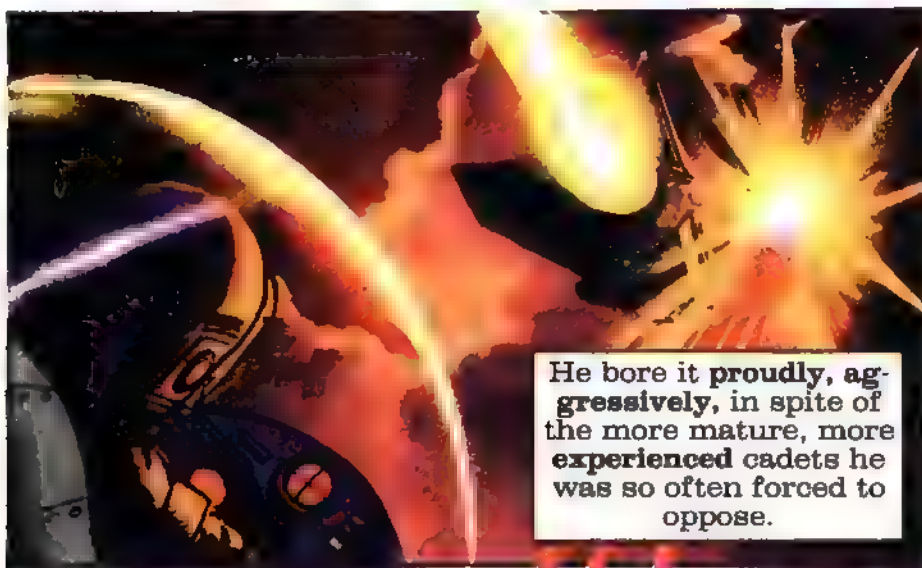
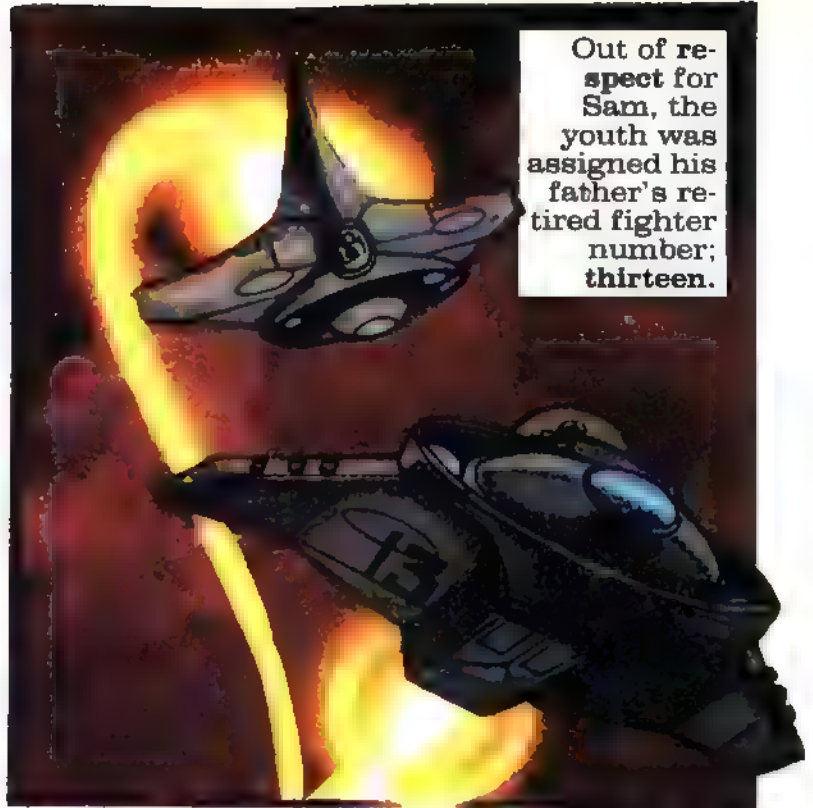
Everyone expected Sam's son Kris to follow in his dad's footsteps; to join his father in the outworlds and become one of the hottest Peacemakers in the service. Hence the nickname Steamer: Hot on the old man's tail!

starfire

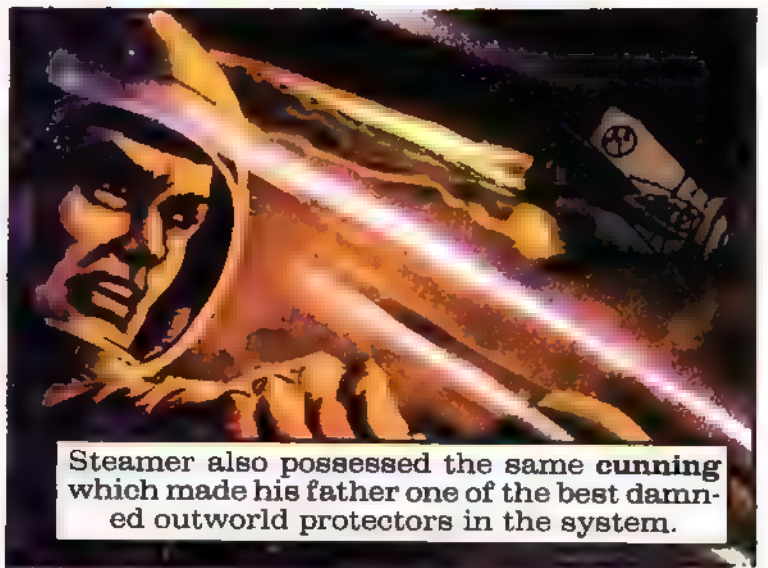
Like his father, Steamer had it all. Born with a natural aptitude for flight, the boy, though only thirteen, had the innate courage of a hardened warrior..



Out of respect for Sam, the youth was assigned his father's retired fighter number; thirteen.



He bore it proudly, aggressively, in spite of the more mature, more experienced cadets he was so often forced to oppose.



Steamer also possessed the same cunning which made his father one of the best damned outworld protectors in the system.



Exercising that cunning, the boy often employed his father's tried and proven patented aerial techniques.



Like a sly fox, he would lead the hound a merry chase . . . only to turn on him at the least expected moment, quickly, mercilessly springing for the kill!



It's Steamer again, sir! Not even his Squad Leader can stand in a fight against him!

Though he was younger, smaller and seemed more frail than the older boys, Steamer's skills and infectious good cheer earned him the respect and friendship of his fellow cadets.

It also, however, brought him one very dangerous enemy!



Good show, Steam!
That's three times
running you've made a
horse's ass out of
Becker!



Colonel Hawk
wants to personally
congratulate you, boy.
You and your Nav-rob
get your tails on
over there!



Steamer
my boy!

Sir!

You do great honor
to your family name, son.
Your father has every
right to be proud.

Keep flying
like that and you'll earn
a place in his frontier
squadron, yet!

Thank you,
Colonel.



Damn that snot-nosed
prick! Three times he's
gotten in a lucky shot!



I'm gonna burn
that little shit if it's
the last thing I do!

Though none of us realized it at the time, Steamer's fleeting moments of triumph at the Academy were destined to be **short-lived**. An invisible cloud of **doom** hung over the boy which was to curse him for the rest of his life.



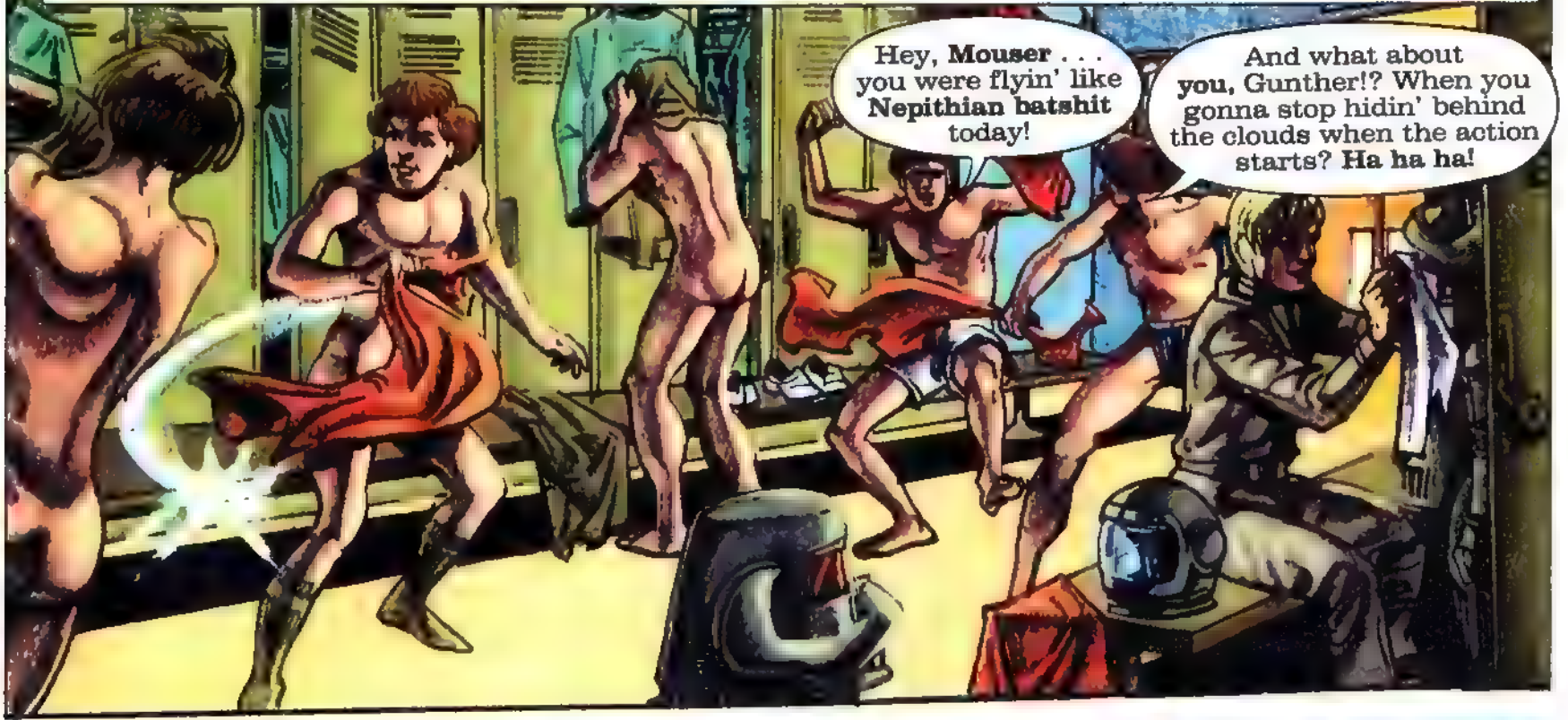
Tough luck, Becker. Maybe next ti—!

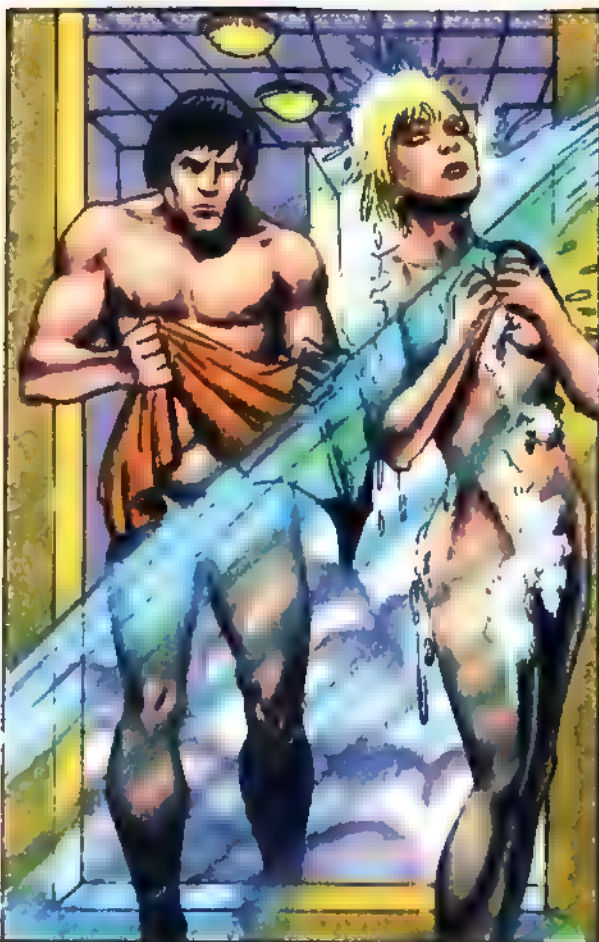


We should have **known** there would be trouble when Becker, ignoring standard military courtesies due his commanding officers, stalked angrily off after the other cadets. Yet, Colonel Hawk and myself never **dreamed** of the **nightmare** which was to follow.



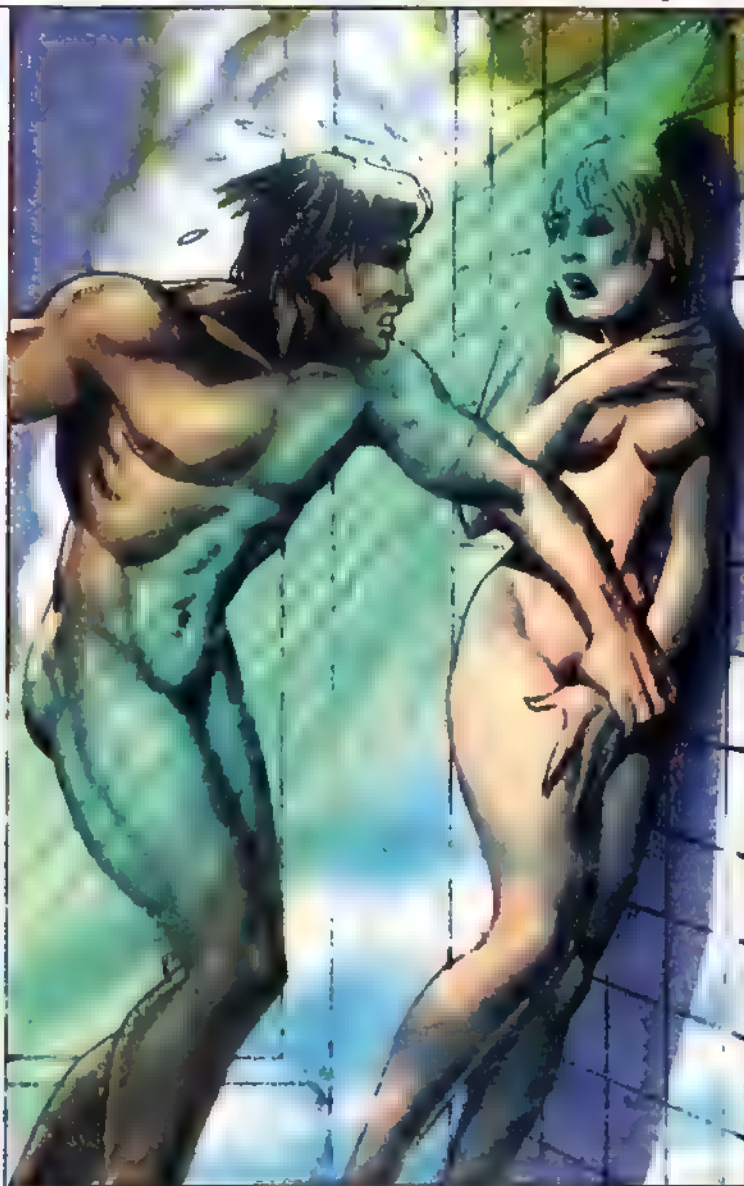
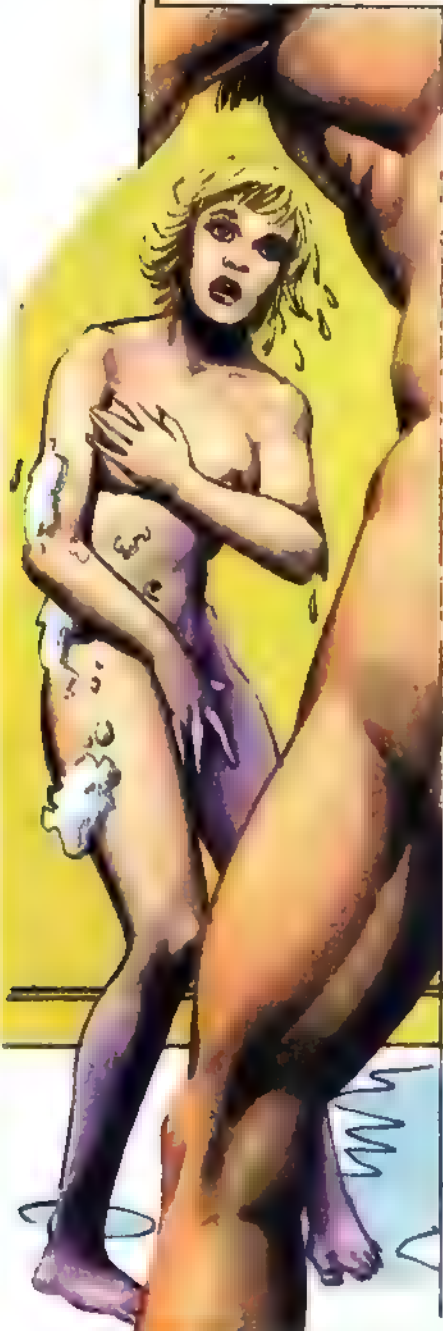
Neither Colonel Hawk nor myself were present, and have only the testimony of the other boys as to what occurred in the suit-up rooms.

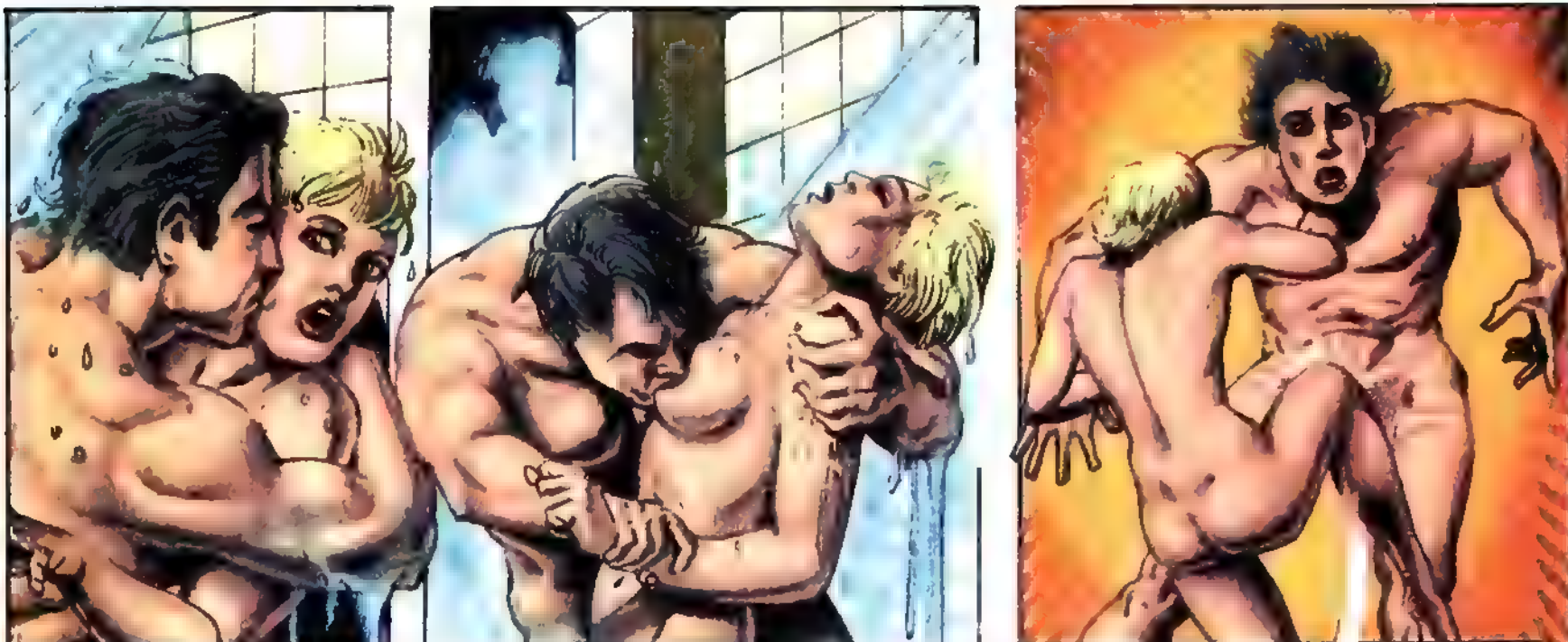




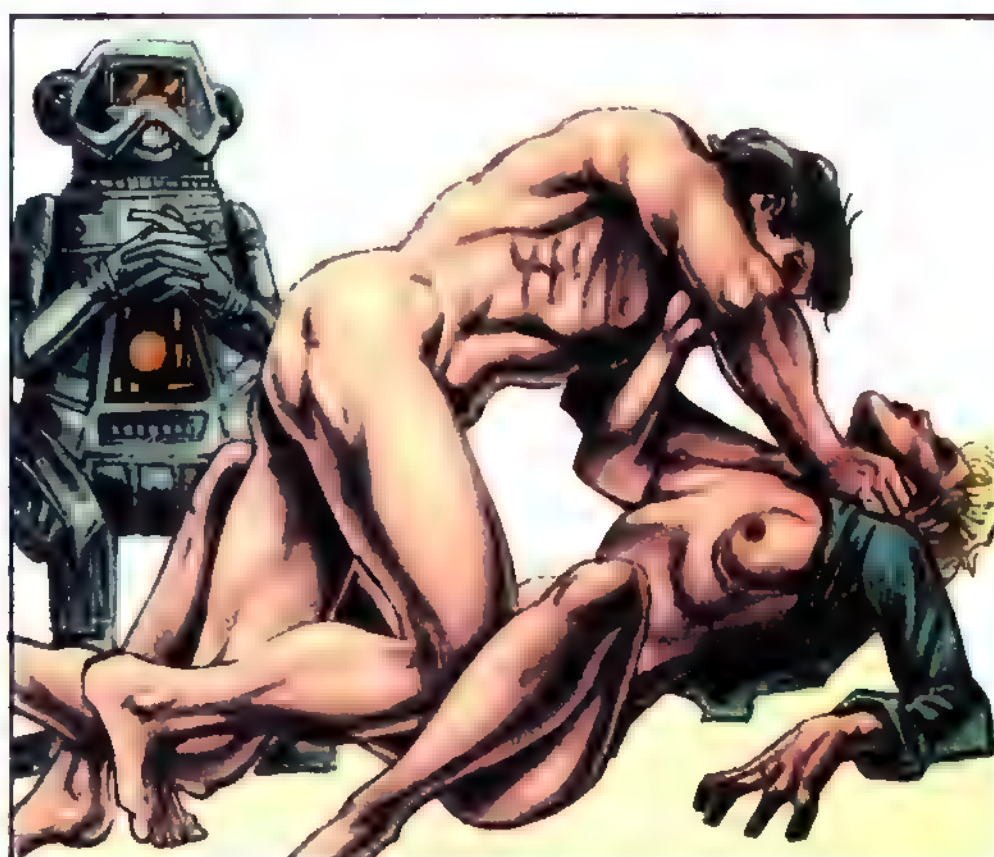
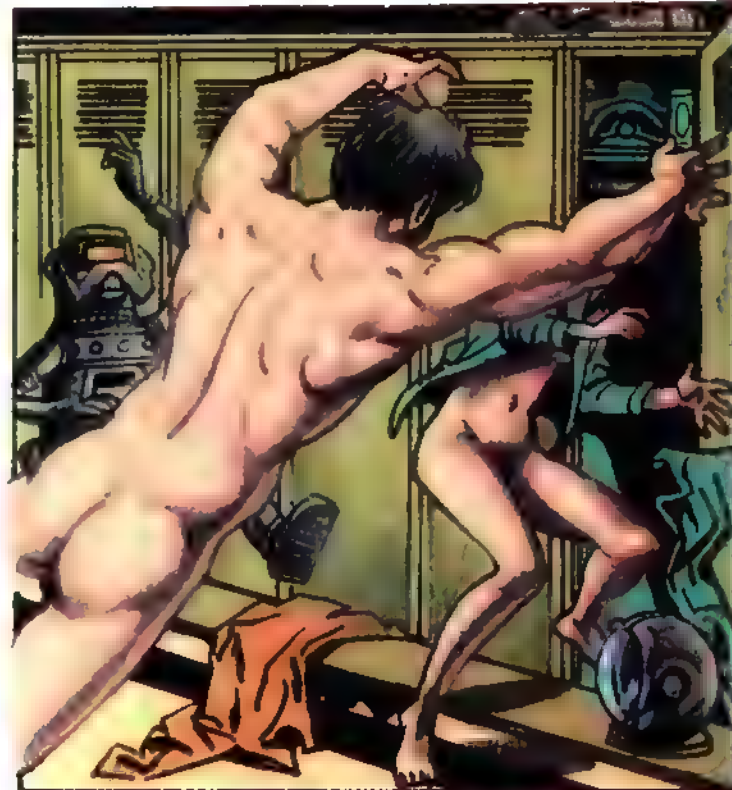
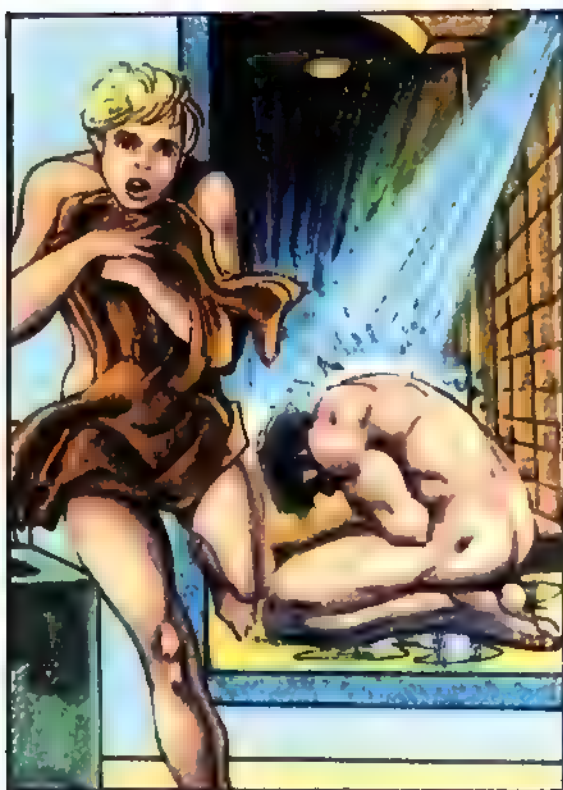
Yet, even the cadets could only tell us **so much**. The rest we've tried to **piece together** from the meager clues that were left behind.

Apparently, Becker, nursing his wounded pride, was lying in wait for the younger and smaller cadet in the showers. No doubt there were angry words, maybe even some heated punches thrown. Though outweighed and dwarfed by his Squad Leader, **Steamer** would not have allowed himself to be **intimidated**. He would have given as good as he took. And after the first **blood** was drawn, the entire incident would have been **forgotten** . . . just like any other schoolboy row.





But something else happened down there. Some intangible something we can't quite put our fingers on, which made this much more than a childish altercation.

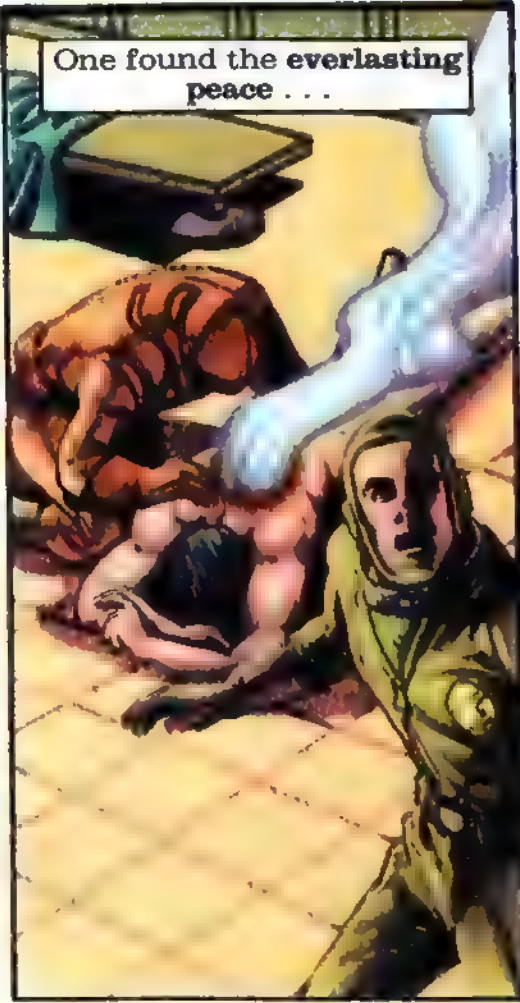




Perhaps we'll
never know
why. Perhaps
we'll never
know how . . .!



About all we do know, is that we lost two of
the finest cadets the academy had ever pro-
duced that night.



One found the everlasting
peace . . .



. . . that the other would
simply never know!

to be continued . . .!



Japan. The Island Empire. Land of the Rising Sun. Home of small cars, kabuki dancers, very complicated cameras with lots of expensive attachments, and more **monsters** than you can shake a stick at.

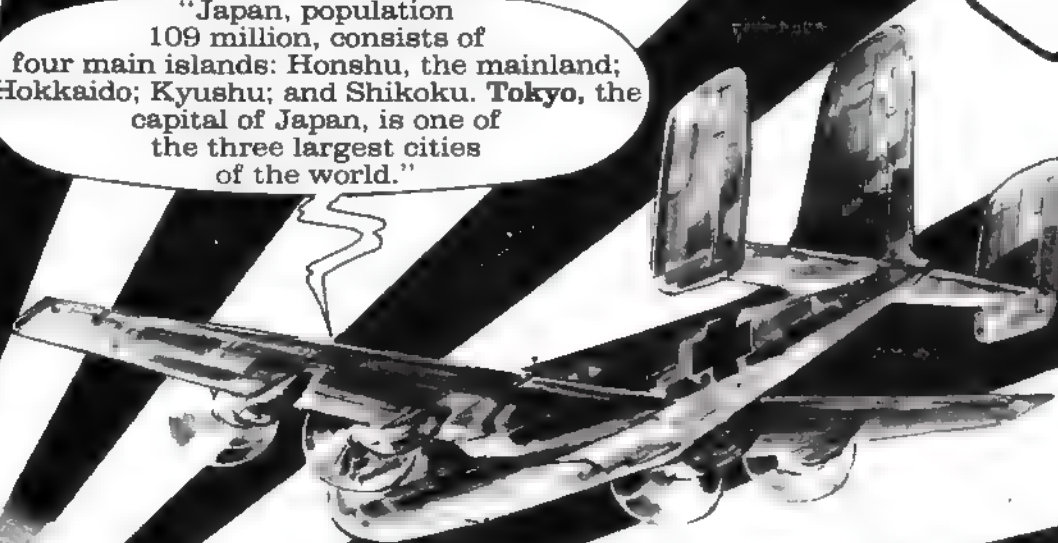
As the sun rises on the Land of the Rising Sun, a Red Cross cargo plane wings steadily toward it. And aboard the plane, **Rex Havoc** and the **Asskickers of the Fantastic** prepare for the most dangerous mission of their lives... plus a small vacation if they can manage it.

Rex Havoc



and the ASSKICKERS of the FANTASTIC

"Japan, population 109 million, consists of four main islands: Honshu, the mainland; Hokkaido; Kyushu; and Shikoku. **Tokyo**, the capital of Japan, is one of the three largest cities of the world."



"Around the twelfth century, and for seven hundred years to follow, Japan was ruled by the brutal **shoguns**, military governors infamous for their cruel and wily ways...!"

One of them **shogun cats** must have arranged these flight accommodations for us.



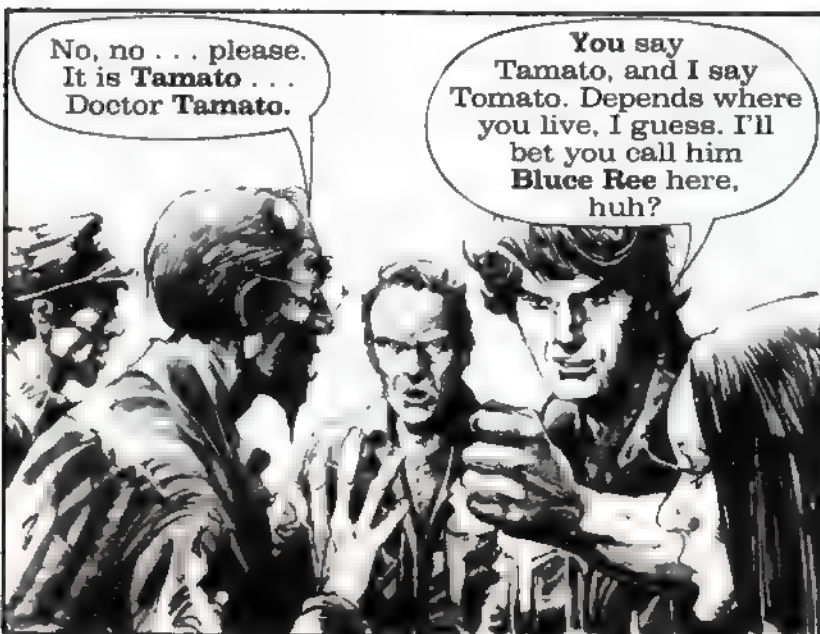
Tokyo International Airport.



Hey, it's a bunch of oriental guys!

This is Japan, Rex. They run the whole island!

Does MacArthur know about this?



No, no . . . please. It is Tamato . . . Doctor Tamato.

You say Tamato, and I say Tomato. Depends where you live, I guess. I'll bet you call him Bluce Ree here, huh?

Hajimemashite, gentlemen. It is an honor to meet at last the fabulous Rex Havoc and the esteemed Asskickers of the Fantastic.

I am Dr. Tamato. Allow me please to present Yam Squash and Suzi Jaquzzi, my teammates in Japan's own organization of monster specialists, inspired, of course, by the Asskickers. We are called Kayo Komodo and the Strikers of British Behinds.



Well, listen here, Dr. Tomato. You can just bet we're honored, too. Always good to meet up with other monster-hunters, even little wee fellows like you . . . !

I'm Major Lars Wurlitzer, Doctor. I believe we had a mutual friend in Dr. Serizawa, who valiantly threw his life away trying to suck all the air out of Goddammo years ago.

Yes. Had Dr. Serizawa only known that when he dropped his oxygen-destroyer into Tokyo Bay, not only would he not kill Goddammo, but drive out a hundred more monsters slumbering peacefully at the bottom of the sea.

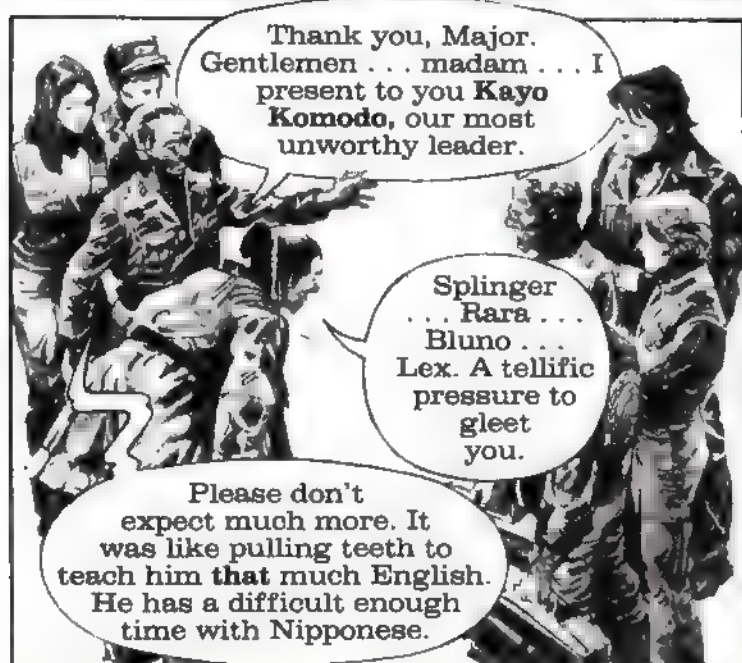
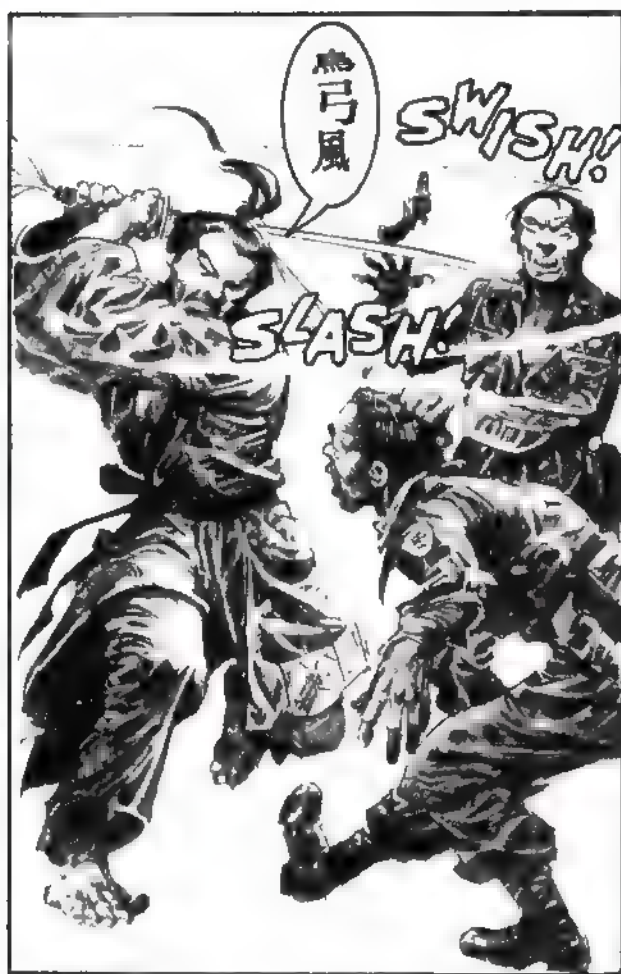


I'm curious to know where your team leader, Kayo Komodo, is, Doctor.

So am . . . I . . . ! Oh, dear!



囊鼓



Ten minutes later, the helicopter transporting the Asskickers and the Strikers of Brutish Behinds, approaches the very heart of Tokyo, and the startled monster-hunters come face-to-face with their darkest nightmare!

Upright, it stands as high as a forty-story building; it is fifteen times more massive than the largest dinosaur; it weighs nearly twelve hundred tons; and it eats whole stadiums of people at a single sitting.

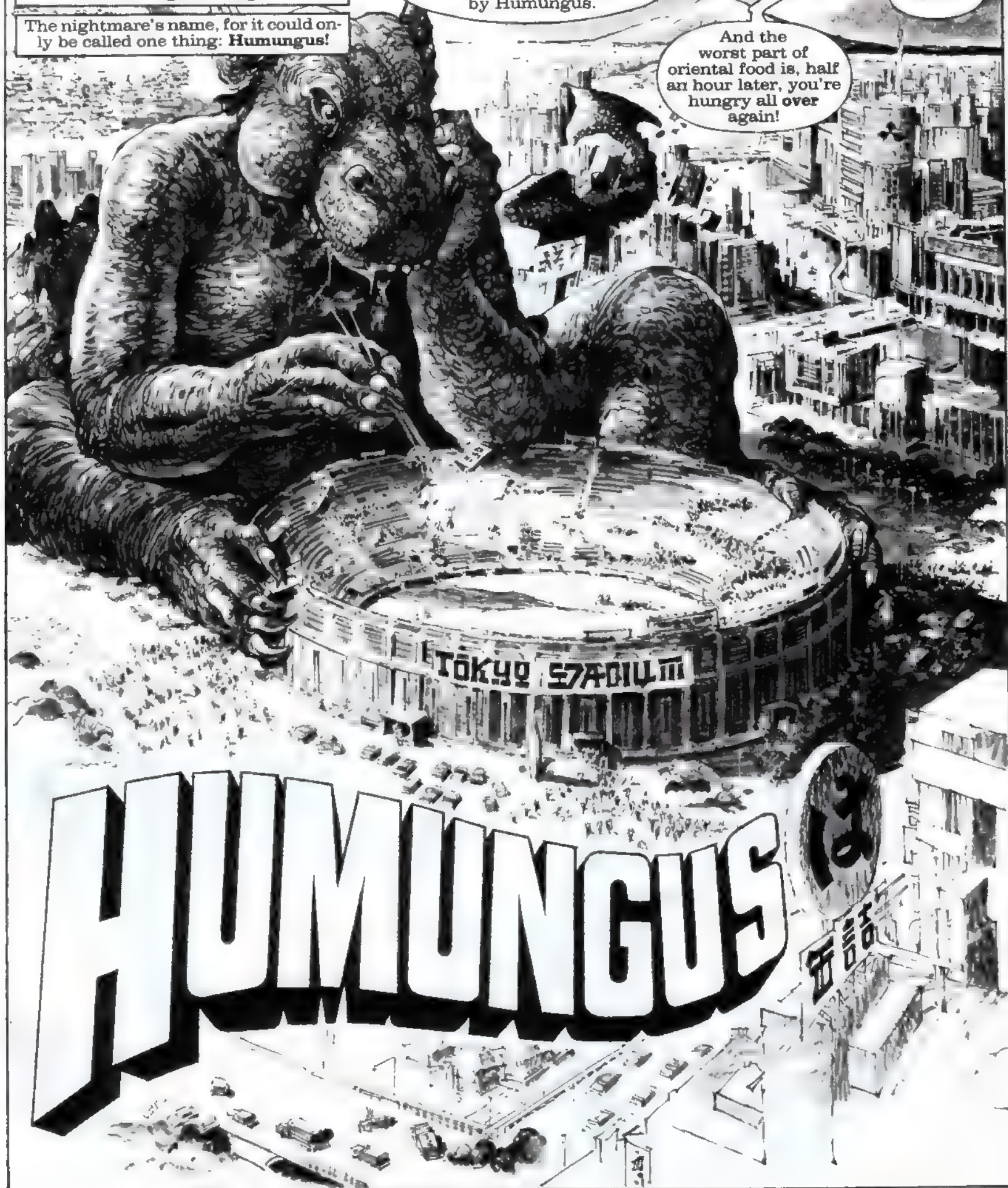
The nightmare's name, for it could only be called one thing: **Humungus!**

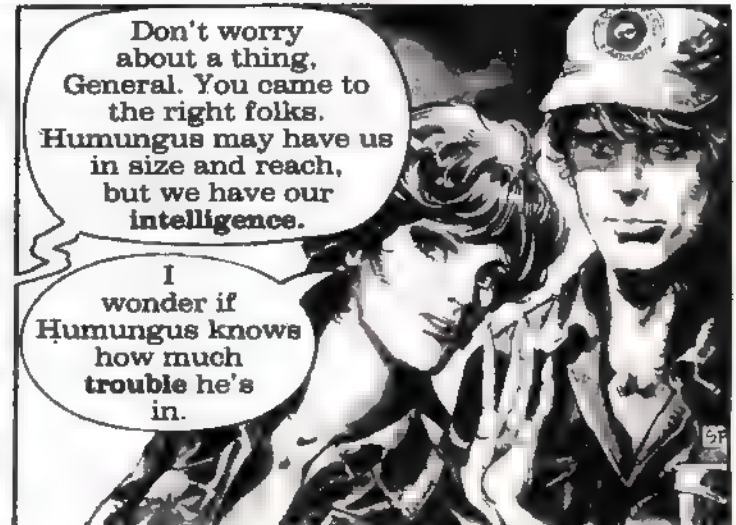
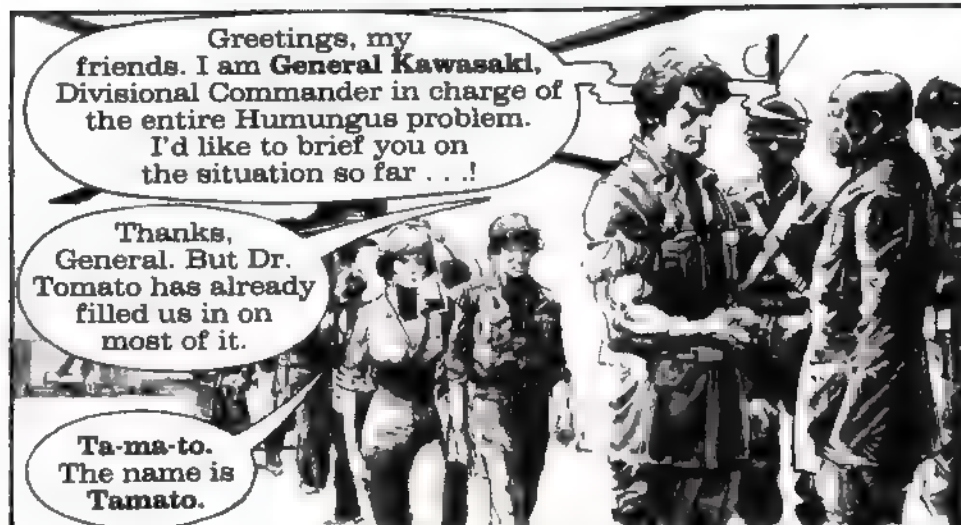
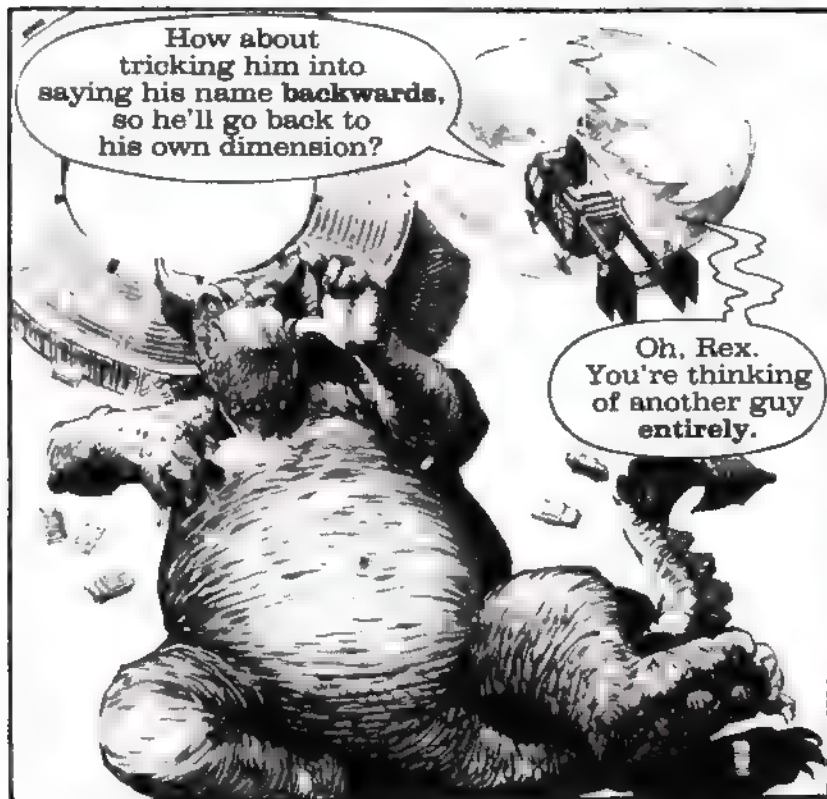
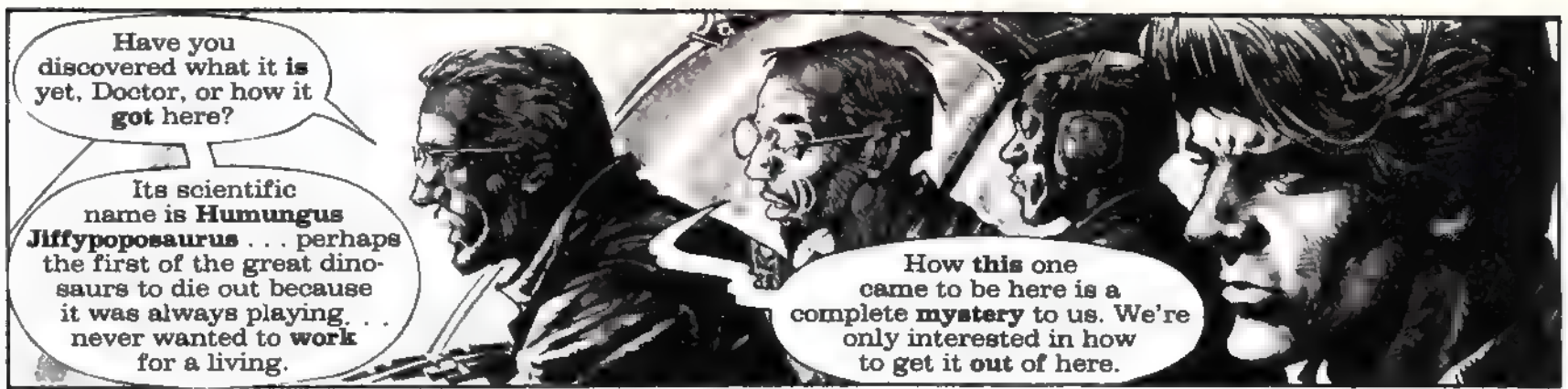
Everything we've tried has failed against Humungus. Bombs, rockets, fire, radiation . . . our armed forces are powerless to stop it.

And every day, the death toll climbs, hundreds of citizens snatched from their offices, sucked out of their automobiles, and casually devoured by Humungus.

And the worst part of oriental food is, half an hour later, you're hungry all over again!

REX!!







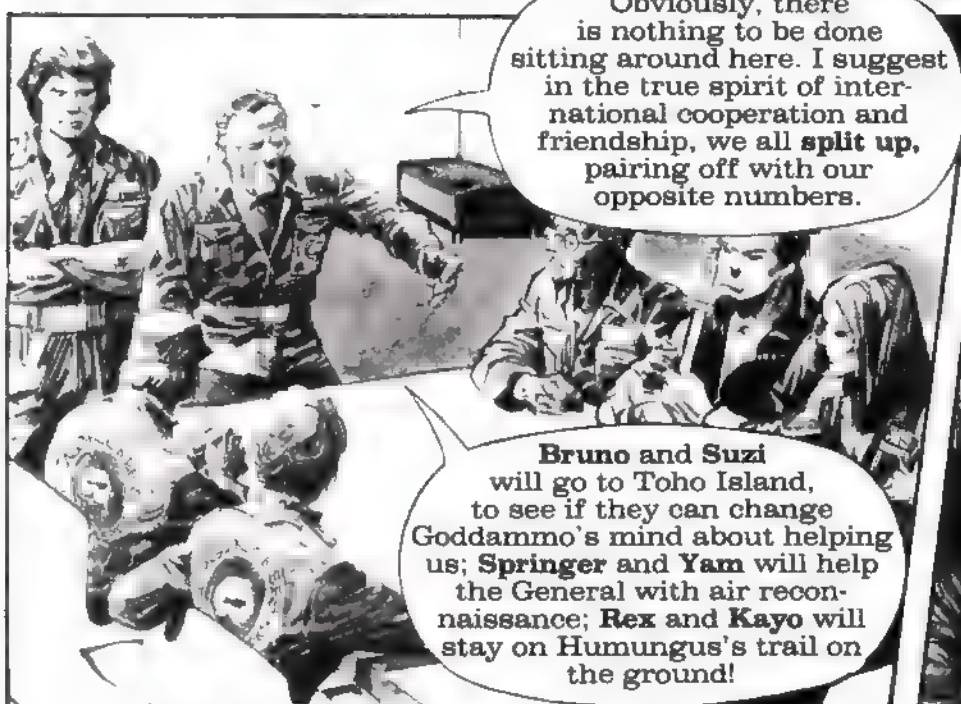


Are you quite certain this man is on your team, Major?

We do seem to have colorful leaders. Like Kayo, Rex was quite a bright fellow once, before he was ambushed and beaten senseless by a gang of monsters on a miniature golf course.

I used to think he was getting better, but—!

Here, pixies C'mon out, little fairy folk! I have a surprise for you...!



Obviously, there is nothing to be done sitting around here. I suggest in the true spirit of international cooperation and friendship, we all split up, pairing off with our opposite numbers.

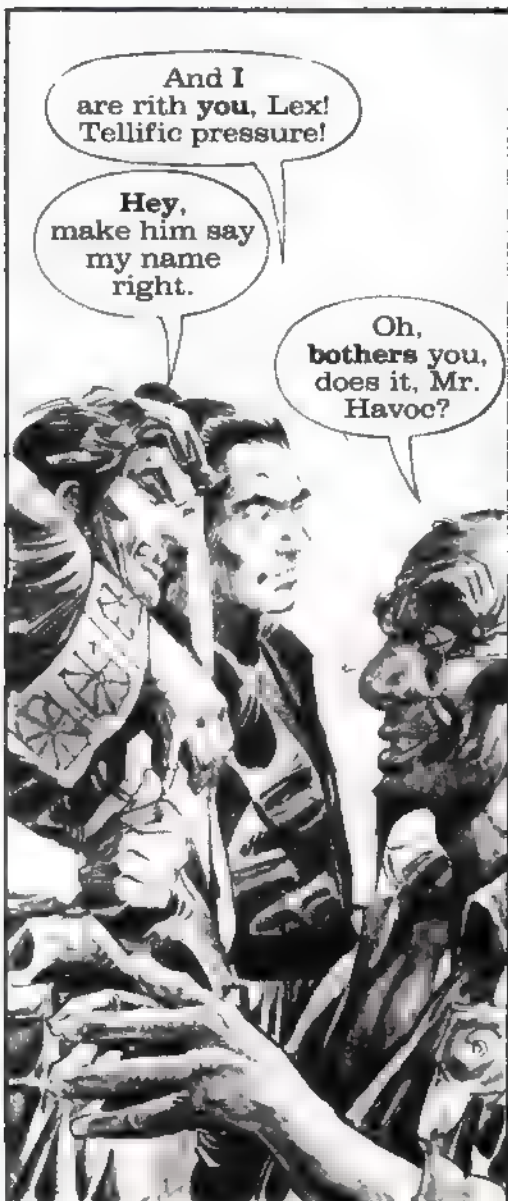
Bruno and Suzi will go to Toho Island, to see if they can change Goddammo's mind about helping us; Springer and Yam will help the General with air reconnaissance; Rex and Kayo will stay on Humungus's trail on the ground!



Dr. Tamato and I will remain here in the armory, to formulate, if possible, some kind of weapon against the monster.

And we can learn from each other at the same time! Marvelous! C'mon, Suzi!

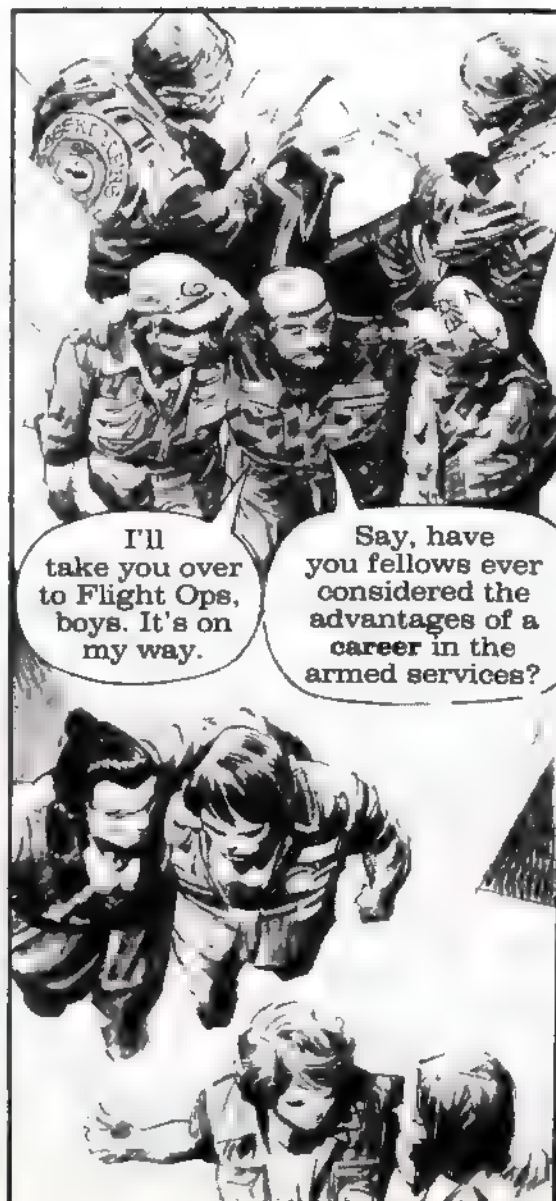
I'm with you, Bruno!



And I are rith you, Lex! Tellific pressure!

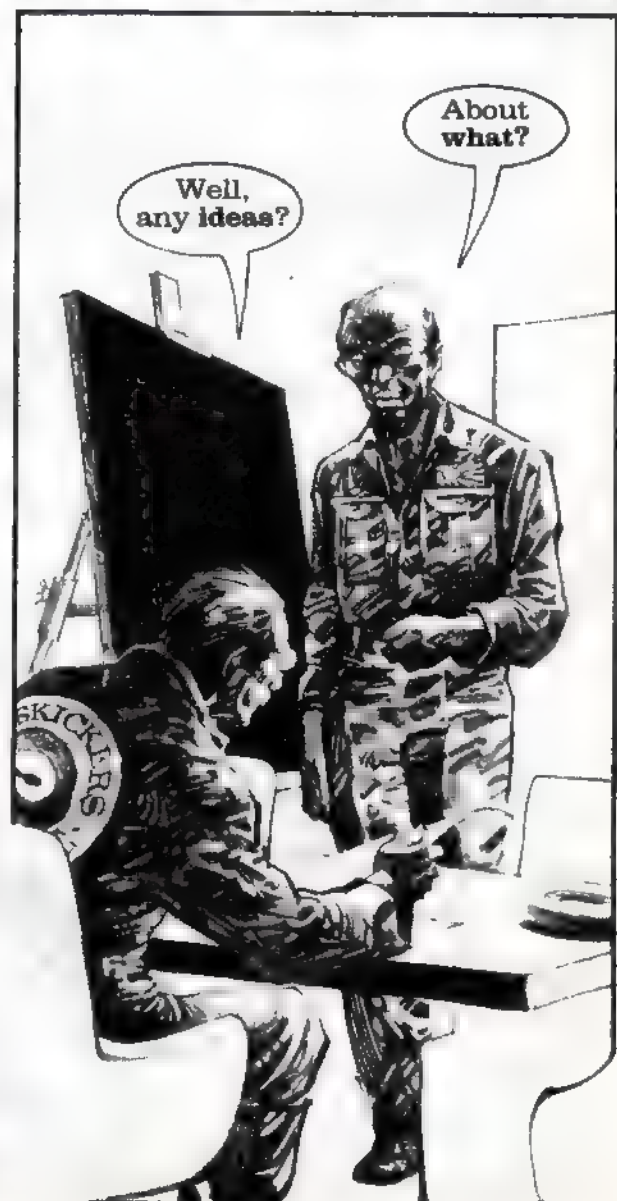
Hey, make him say my name right.

Oh, bothers you, does it, Mr. Havoc?



I'll take you over to Flight Ops, boys. It's on my way.

Say, have you fellows ever considered the advantages of a career in the armed services?



About what?

Well, any ideas?

Toho Island: The "Alcatraz" of king-sized monsters. Established in the late 1960s as a humane solution to the growing behemoth crisis in Japan, Toho (called "The Rock" by its inmates) is the end of the line for the most hardened gargantuas.

Insuperable walls five hundred feet high enclose the volcanic island, confining a wide variety of monstrosities, from catastrophic giant moths to world-wrecking jumbo shrimp to angleworms the size of Globemasters, which, left to their own devices, would wrestle landscapes and dropkick skyscrapers without respite.

Skimming toward this colossal calaboose in a police launch, Bruno and Suzi go to meet the only creature on earth which might defeat Humungus.



Goddammo?
Yeah, he's on the yard someplace. I don't know if he'll talk to you, but if you want to try, we'll use the cable car.



Sufferin' smokes, Suzi, look at this!

Maggotron, The Sludge That Walks; **Aggravato,** The Molestosaurus; **Mucus,** The Revolting; **Creature X,** The Mange From Outer Space... they're all here! And here's **Goddammo,** right near the bottom of the list...!

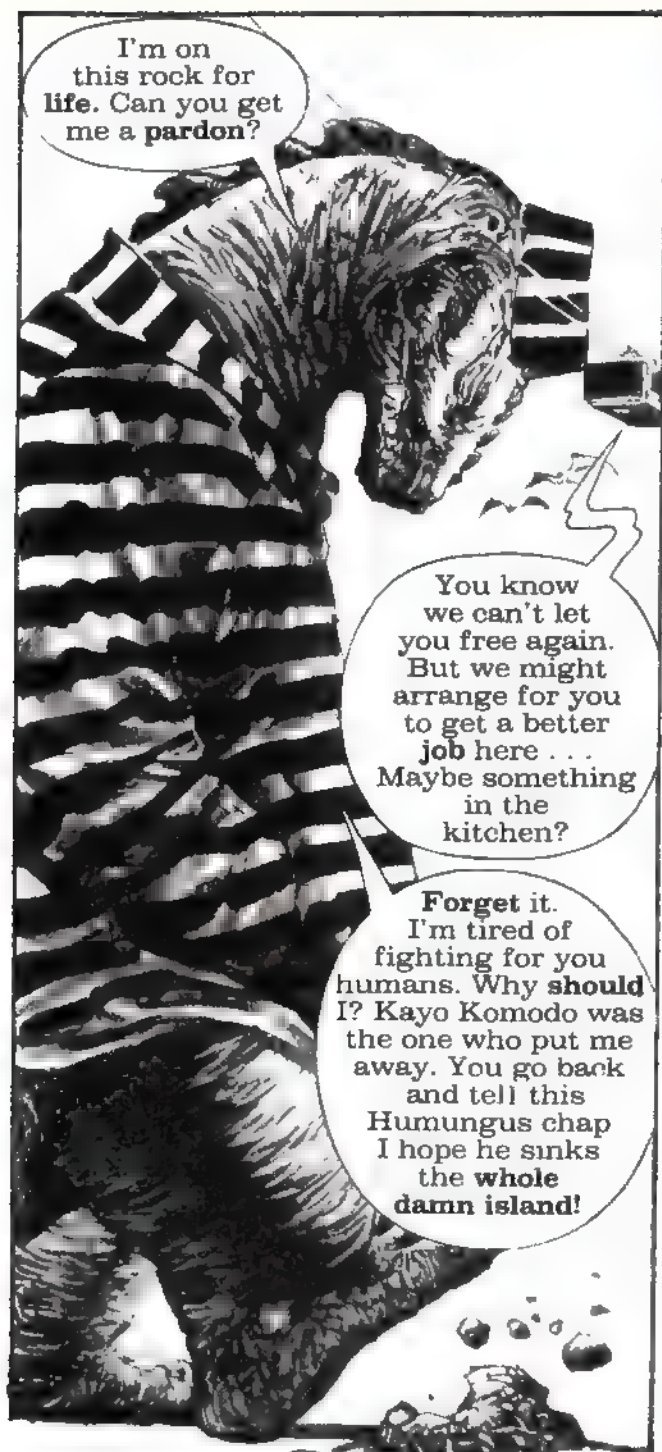
To you, he's **Goddammo**... King of the Monsters. But here, he's just another con.



Ten minutes, **Goddammo.** I'm watching the time.

Well, well. **Suzi Jacuzzi.** And pray what are the **Strikers of Brutish Behinds** up to these days?

Same old stuff, basically, **Goddammo.** **Humungus** is giving everybody a pretty bad time of it. We could use your help. How about a deal?



I'm on this rock for life. Can you get me a pardon?

You know we can't let you free again. But we might arrange for you to get a better job here . . . Maybe something in the kitchen?

Forget it. I'm tired of fighting for you humans. Why should I? Kayo Komodo was the one who put me away. You go back and tell this Humungus chap I hope he sinks the whole damn island!



We'll build you a highrise. Right on the yard. Twenty storeys. Do with it whatever you want.

Thirty storeys! And with people in it.



Thirty storeys, and a maintenance man inside. But you gotta give him a fair chance to escape.

C'mon, Goddammo. What're you worried about? You're King of the Monsters! And except for that nasty licking the ape Kong gave you awhile back, nobody's ever defeated you.



That's a lie!! That stupid monkey never beat me! Never! Never! Never!!



You're on report, Goddammo! You hear me? You'll get thirty days in the volcano for this! That'll sweat off some of your meanness!



Of all the stupid things to say! Why did you have to go and mention Kong? How did you think he was going to react to something like that?

Cheez . . . just trying to help. Everybody's so darn touchy in Japan.

Back at
Humungus Crisis
Control . . .!

Major Fuwi,
I have a couple
prospective recruits
for you. I want you
to take them on a
recon flight of
Humungus.

You mean,
I'm not grounded
anymore, sir?

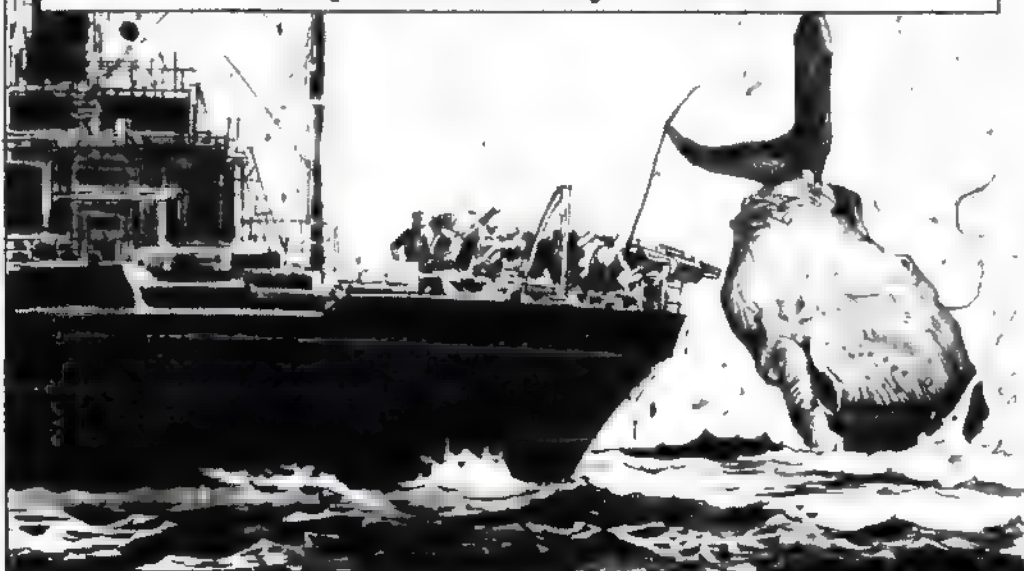
That's correct,
Major. Just remember
this is a reconnaissance
mission. I know you were
a kamikaze pilot who
never got to see any
action in the war, but
the war is over now.
You don't have to
prove anything to
anybody.



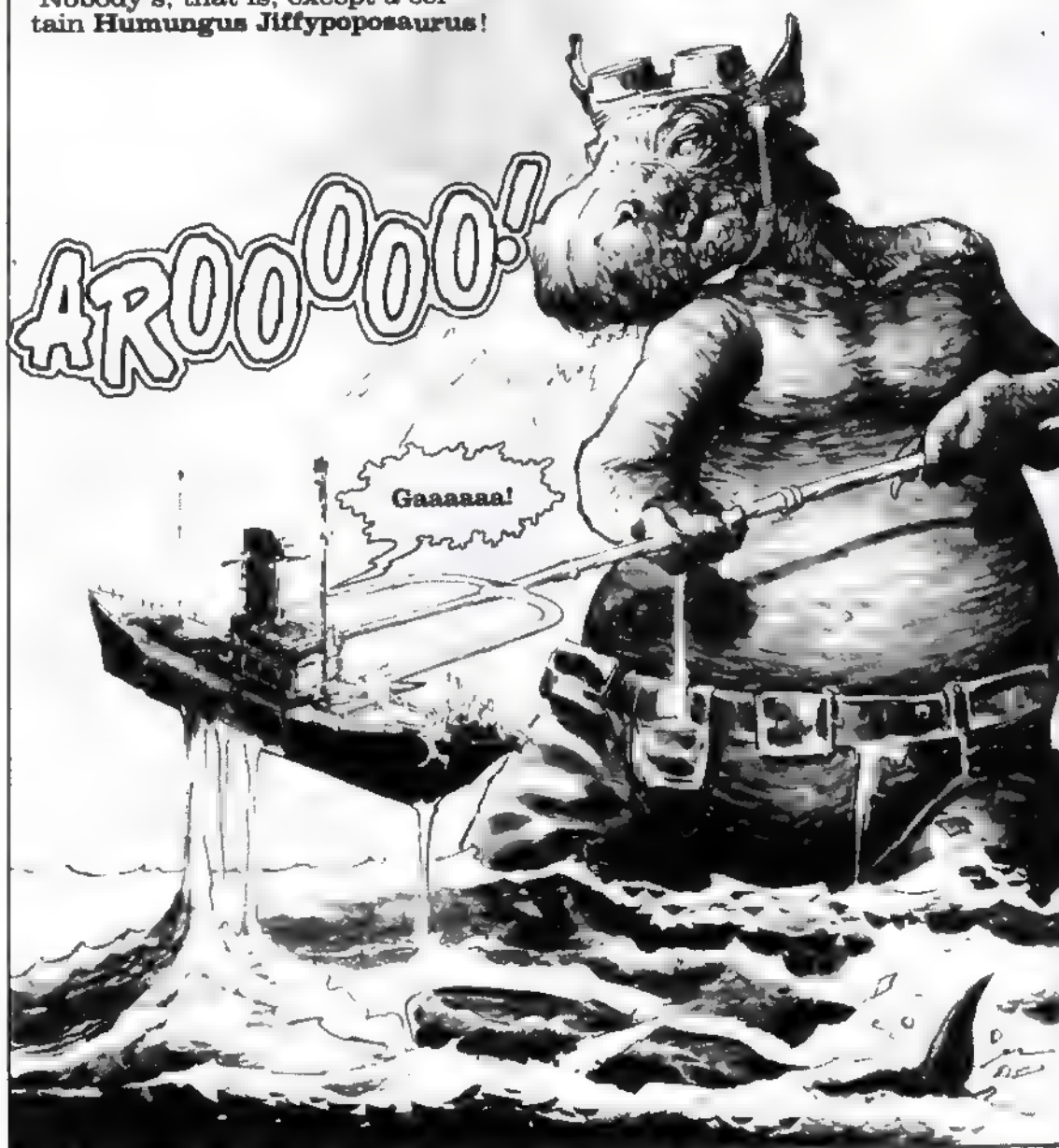
No offense
intended, but it
is a shame your
idiotic leader,
Rex Havoc, chased
away those small
girls. We might
have had Humungus
under control
by now.

What's that
supposed to mean?
You can't talk that
way about my skipper!
How would you like a
pop in the nose—?
No offense
intended.

While at sea, a Japanese whaling ship corrals and slaughters humpbacks like nobody's business.



Nobody's, that is, except a cer-
tain Humungus Jiffyposaurus!



AROOOOO!

Gaaaaaa!

And coming in, from above . . .!



And just
what do you
call that samurai
duel between the
airport police
and your boss
Kayo Komodo?
A meeting of
minds?

Oh no,
that's not
the same at all.
Your leader is
much dumber than
my leader.

The Japanese fighter-jet dives at the gargantuan reptile, its guns blazing with the flames of glory . . . !



Hmmmmmm!
Guns merely
tickle Humungus.
Time for desperate
measures.

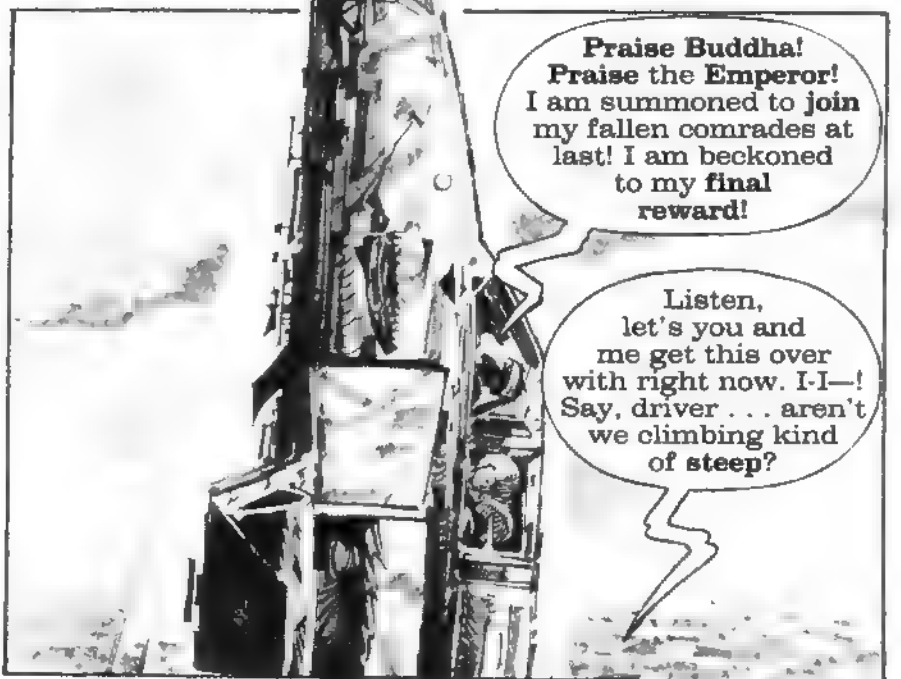
Dumb? Dumb?!
Kayo Komodo hasn't
got the mind of a dazed
periwinkle, and you
bring up dumb?

Beware,
friend. You
border on
impuning my
commander.



Praise Buddha!
Praise the Emperor!
I am summoned to join
my fallen comrades at
last! I am beckoned
to my final
reward!

Listen,
let's you and
me get this over
with right now. I-I—!
Say, driver . . . aren't
we climbing kind
of steep?

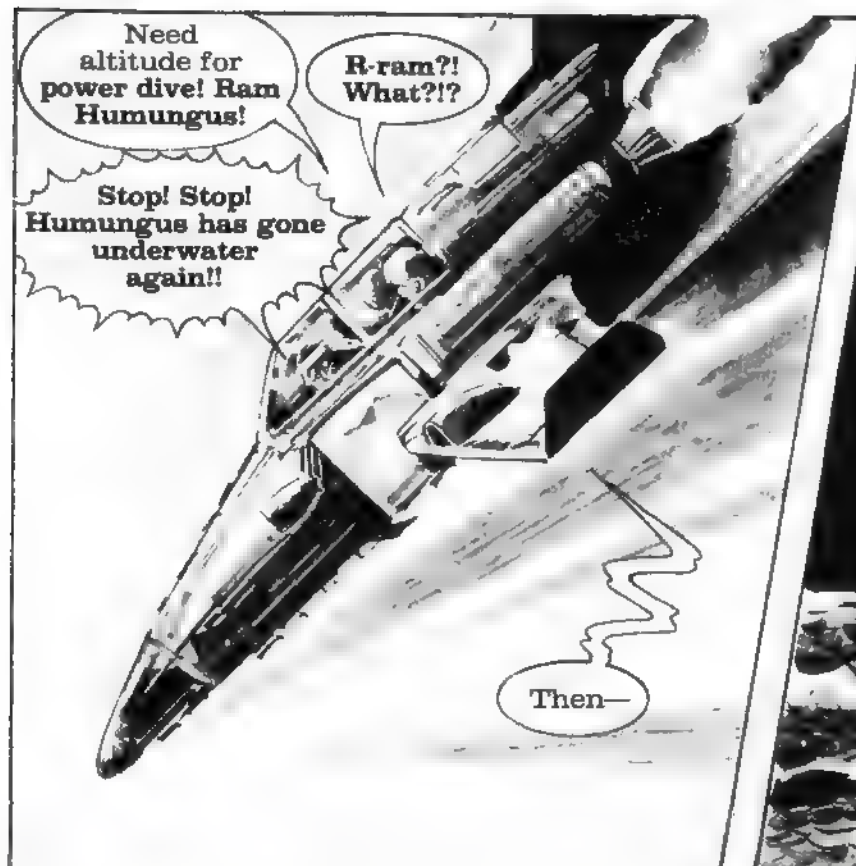


Need
altitude for
power dive! Ram
Humungus!

R-ram?!
What?!?

Stop! Stop!
Humungus has gone
underwater
again!!

Then—



BANZAI!!!

—We go
after
him!

AIEEEEEEE!

PLOOSH!



Meantime, at the armory, Lars and Tamato toil endlessly over their plans to stop Humungus . . . some of them bizarre, some of them really bizarre.

I see it this way, Doctor: We build this giant robot—a female Humungus—about four hundred feet high, slightly taller with high heels.

This girl robot will gain Humungus' trust, and then, when he least expects it, wham, she smashes him right on the occipital.

No, no, no! Prof. Rimbaldi has already shown that robots over forty feet high cannot work. The hydraulics leak, the whole thing just comes apart at the seams . . .!

And those are a good idea? Inflatable buildings . . . dropped from aircraft to lure Humungus to the North Pole, where he'll hopefully freeze to death? I'd laugh aloud if it weren't so pathetic!

Granted, they look a bit tired, but these are only models. They'll look much more realistic when constructed full-size.

Nuts.

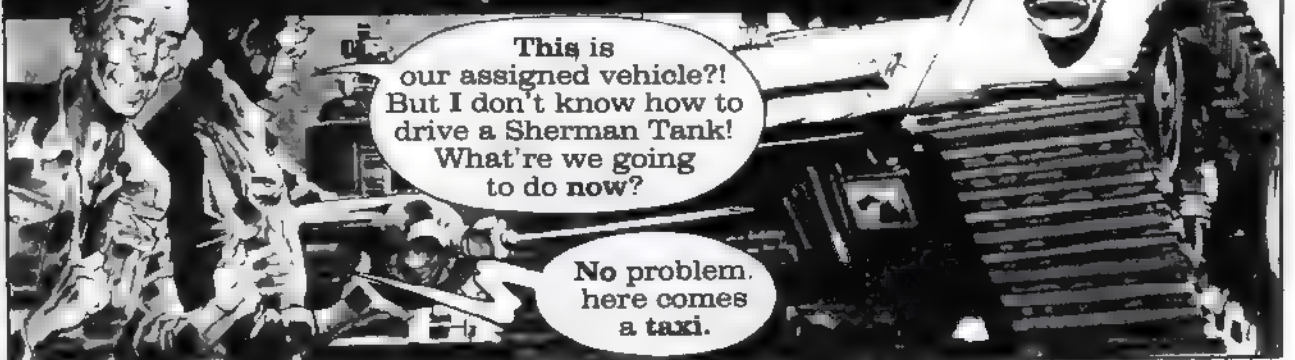
I am still the expert on gargantuan monsters, Major. I know what will work and what won't work against Humungus!

In that case, I'm throwing in with Humungus. I want to be on the winning side when this is all over.

What . . . what are you going to do with that match?

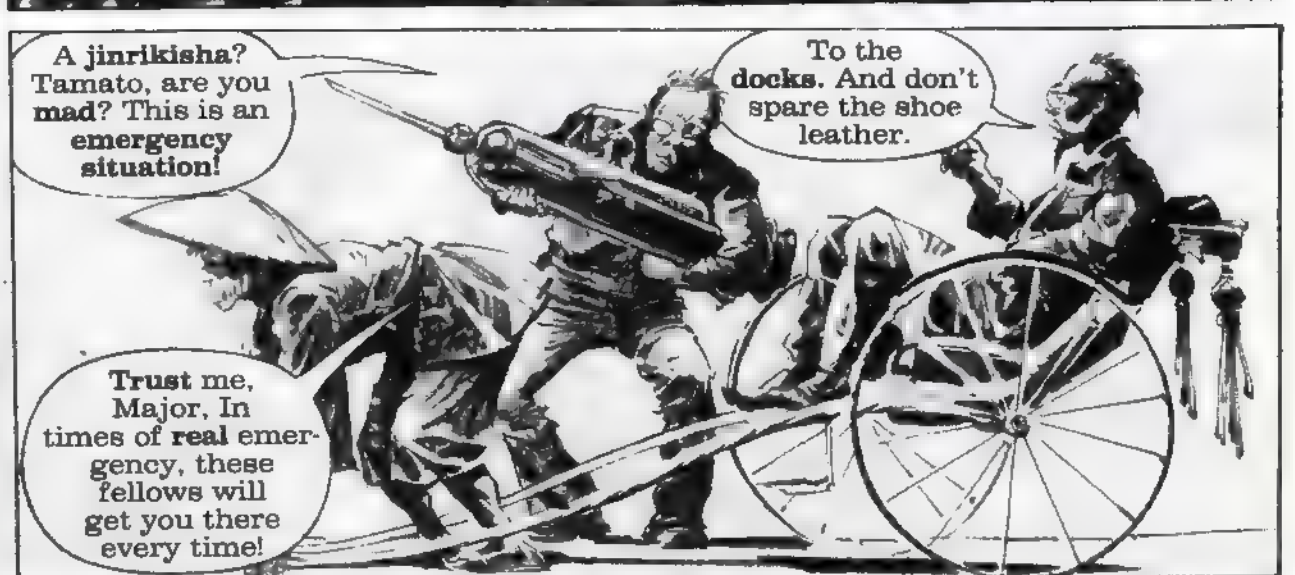


Finally, Lars and Kayo agree on a plan: A giant hypodermic needle filled with the powerful laxative, Hippopotoprune, to incapacitate the monster . . . or at least put him off his appetite. They leave to find Humungus, last seen in the harbor area, but as they emerge from the armory . . .!



This is our assigned vehicle?! But I don't know how to drive a Sherman Tank! What're we going to do now?

No problem. here comes a taxi.



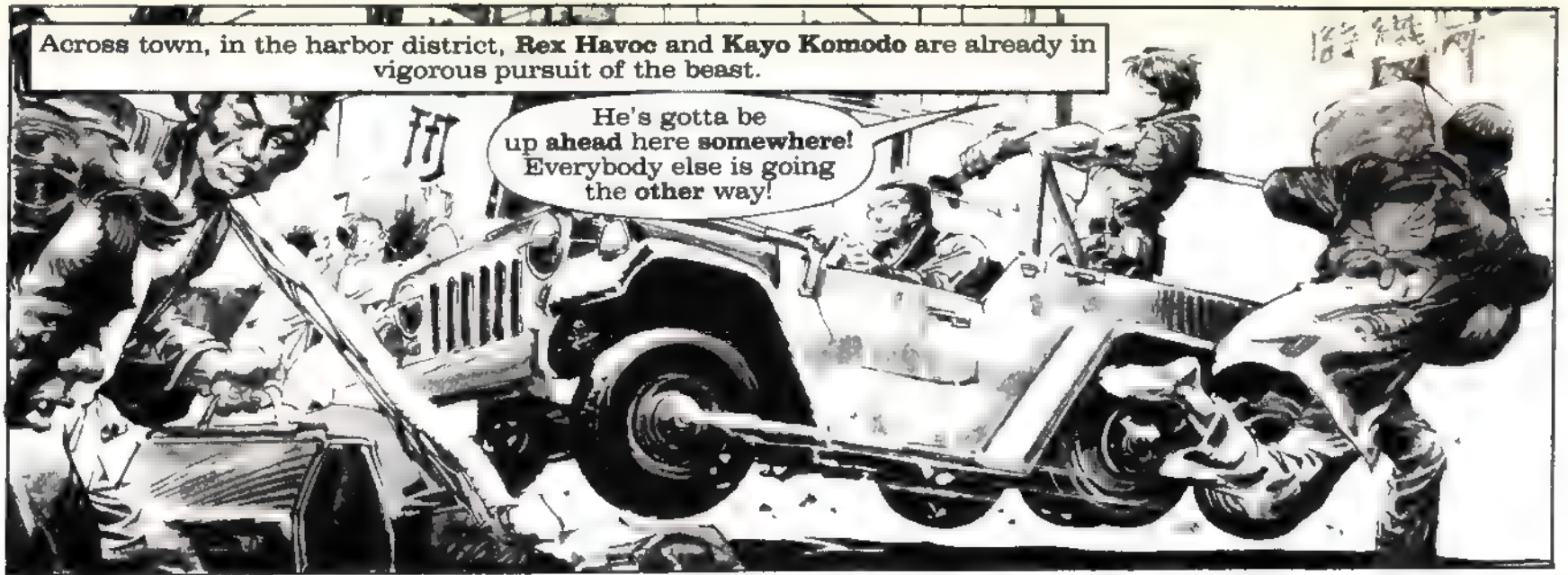
A jinrikisha? Tamato, are you mad? This is an emergency situation!

To the docks. And don't spare the shoe leather.

Trust me, Major. In times of real emergency, these fellows will get you there every time!

Across town, in the harbor district, Rex Havoc and Kayo Komodo are already in vigorous pursuit of the beast.

He's gotta be up ahead here somewhere! Everybody else is going the other way!



When abruptly . . .!

Gaaaaa!

SPLAMMM!



Dinosaur flop. No doubt about it. We're right on his tail.

素力

Eh? You see something, Komodo?



Gulp! He's rubbing those electric towers together . . . trying to get a fire started.

He's going to cook those fishermen . . . unless we can stop him.



Here he comes! Come on! We'll ambush the son of a bitch!



But as Rex and Kayo run to a nearby building, Kayo stops Rex at the entrance, adamant that Rex comply with native custom.

老

聽聽齊鳥

What? My boots? I gotta take them off before we go inside?

Okay, okay! What a country. No wonder you're always getting an ass-whipping from some big bozo.

On the roof ...!

Now hang onto me tight. 'Cause when I get this lasso on him he's going to give us one hell of a struggle!

Remember Pearl Harbor—Whoop!

Halp!
Halp!

鼻

Halp!
Kayo!
Save me!

HACK!
SLICE!
CARVE!

SWIPE!
KERASH!

HELLLLLLL!

Meanwhile, on
Toho Island . . . !

Just get
outta here,
willya? Beat it!
You got me into
enough trouble.

C'mon, Goddammo.
She didn't mean it
about Kong whipping
you. Please help
us.

Tell him
you didn't mean
it, Bruno.

Sure I meant
it. Sissy pants
Goddammo,
sissy pants
Goddammo . . . !

Meanwhile, in
Tokyo Bay . . . !

Paddle . . .
row . . . like this
. . . we have to row
if we're going to
get back to land.
Understand?

You guys
sure knew enough
English before it
came to work.

Meanwhile, in
Downtown Tokyo . . . !

Jinriksha, hmmm?
Trust you, hmmm? Well,
so much for that. This
hippopotoprune has
lost its potency.

Now, if
you'd only listened
to me . . . !

If I'd
listened to you,
we'd still be building
that four hundred foot
robotess! There's
nothing to do now
but return to the
armory.

Meanwhile, in a
back alley in the
harbor district . . . !

A fat lot of
help you were. Soon as
we got out of sight, Humungus
was all over me like a
cheap suit.

Oh
goddammit!
The son of a
bitch stole
my wallet,
too!

By nightfall,
beaten, ragged,
exhausted, all
the members of
both teams
come together
again at the ar-
mory. As they
look around at
each other, it is
painfully obvi-
ous that none
of them have
made any head-
way against
Humungus.

Nothing cheery to report,
I see. Looks like we're right back where
we started from.

Rex, what
happened to your
boots?

Oh, I'm
too pissed off
to even talk
about it.

"In the spirit of international cooperation and friendship," my ass. This woman did everything in her power to undermine my attempts to get Goddammo for us.



I thought I could shame him into joining us. It's an uproarious idea anyway—getting one monster to beat up another for you.

And Yam wouldn't help row the raft when our plane crashed. I had to row clear across Tokyo Bay all by myself.

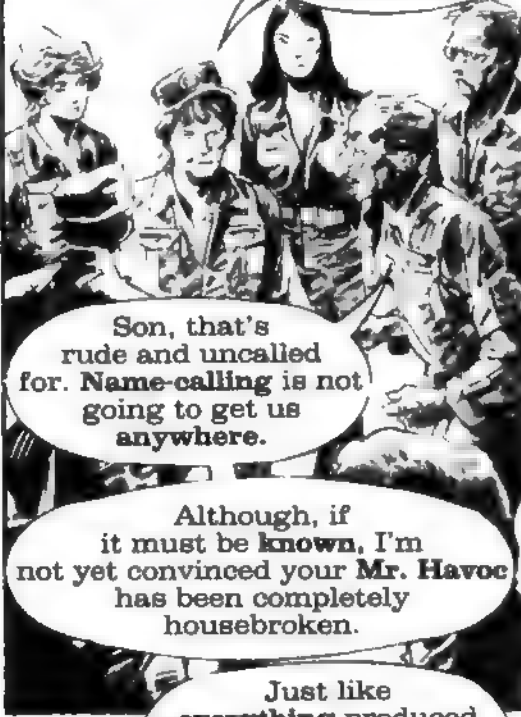


Who's he?

I don't know, but he wouldn't row either.

He said Kayo had the mind of a dazed periwinkle.

Nothing a frontal lobotomy couldn't fix, you understand.



Son, that's rude and uncalled for. Name-calling is not going to get us anywhere.

Although, if it must be known, I'm not yet convinced your Mr. Havoc has been completely housebroken.

Just like everything produced in Japan, you're cheap imitations! And believe me, when this is over, we're all going to have ourselves one big jolly lawsuit.

You're awfully goddamn high and mighty for somebody who's stolen our trademark, copied our uniforms, and damn near taken our company name, too.

Are you threatening us with threats? Because if you are, ket me warn you—!



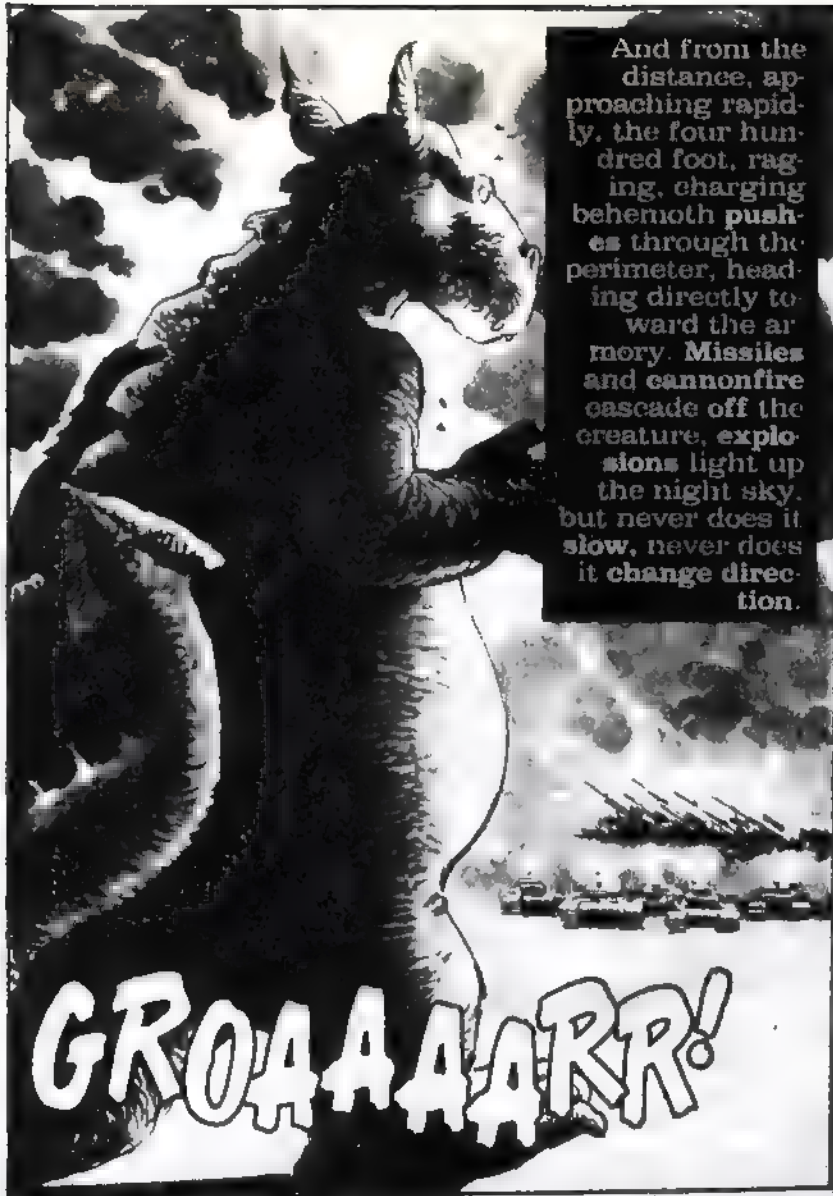
Electricity sparks the air. The two camps stand apart, ready to clash at the twitch of a muscle.



Tension is at the highest critical point, ready to explode. But . . .!

Humungus! Look out! He's coming!





And from the distance, approaching rapidly, the four hundred foot, raging, charging behemoth pushes through the perimeter, heading directly toward the armory. Missiles and cannonfire cascade off the creature, explosions light up the night sky, but never does it slow, never does it change direction.



Circle the taxis, everybody! Secure a barricade!

Perhaps the hand of God will yet intervene.

Yes. But for whom?



Unseen by anyone, the tiny twins from Titunite push a professional model skateboard out from the shadows.



The skateboard rolls across the road, gradually stopping somewhere between Humungus and the monster-hunters.



Almost upon them, hardly a hundred yards off, Humungus bears steadily toward the group. In another moment, it will be all over.



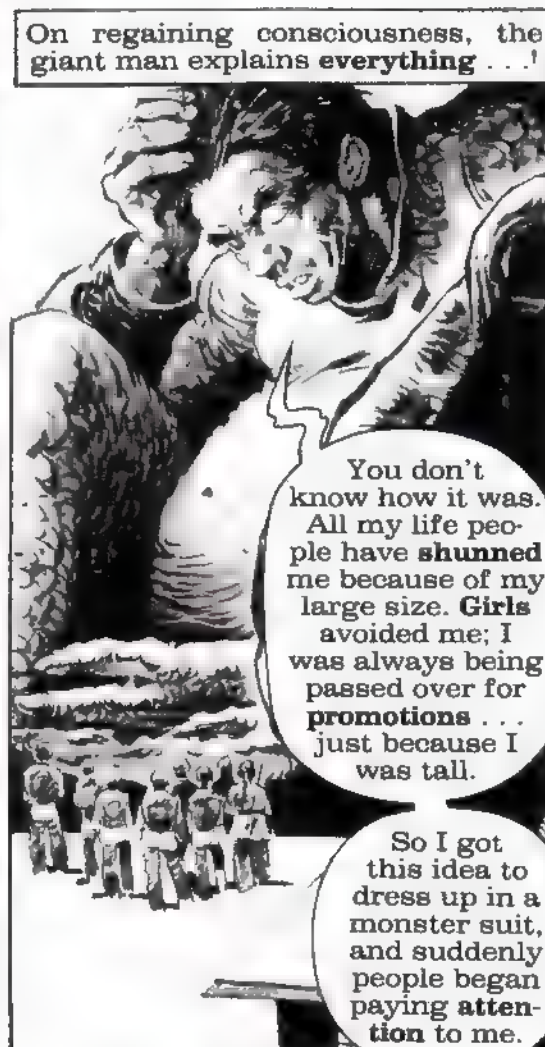
Here's what slipped him up. A **skateboard**! Darn things oughta be outlawed. No more dangerous device is known to man.

Something's not right here . . . !



He's a fake! It's just a guy in a monster suit!

For a fact! And I'll bet there's a device for throwing flame built into the snout of his mask.

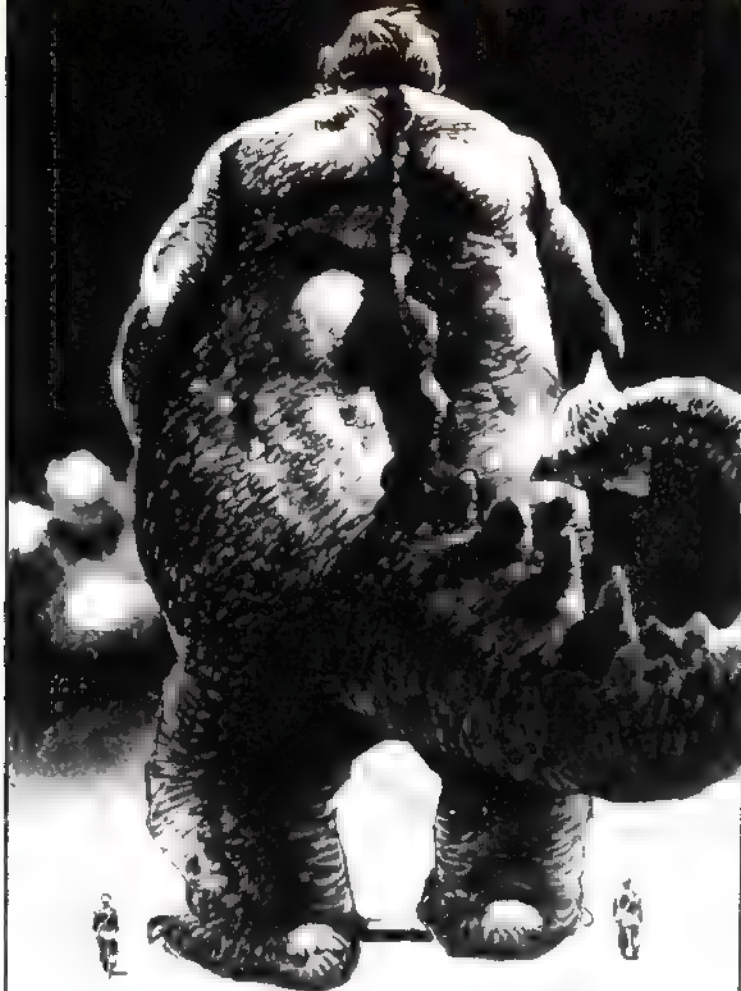


You don't know how it was. All my life people have **shunned** me because of my large size. Girls avoided me; I was always being passed over for **promotions** . . . just because I was tall.

So I got this idea to dress up in a monster suit, and suddenly people began paying **attention** to me.



That's enough. Take him away, officers.



Incredible luck, that skateboard being there. Almost a miracle, I'd say.

It was a miracle! No doubt about it. The face of God was surely smiling on us today.



Perhaps it wasn't entirely a miracle . . .

Wha—!? What is it?

A teensie weensie . . . pom pom!

The next day, with great reluctance, the Asskickers take leave of the Island Empire and the Strikers of Brutish Behinds!

Goodbye!

Bon Voyage!

Sayonara!

What a shame we couldn't stay awhile longer, Lars. We were just getting to know Kayo and the others better, and we're off again.

I wish we could stay, too, Bruno. But more troubles have arisen at home, and we do have to go back to work.

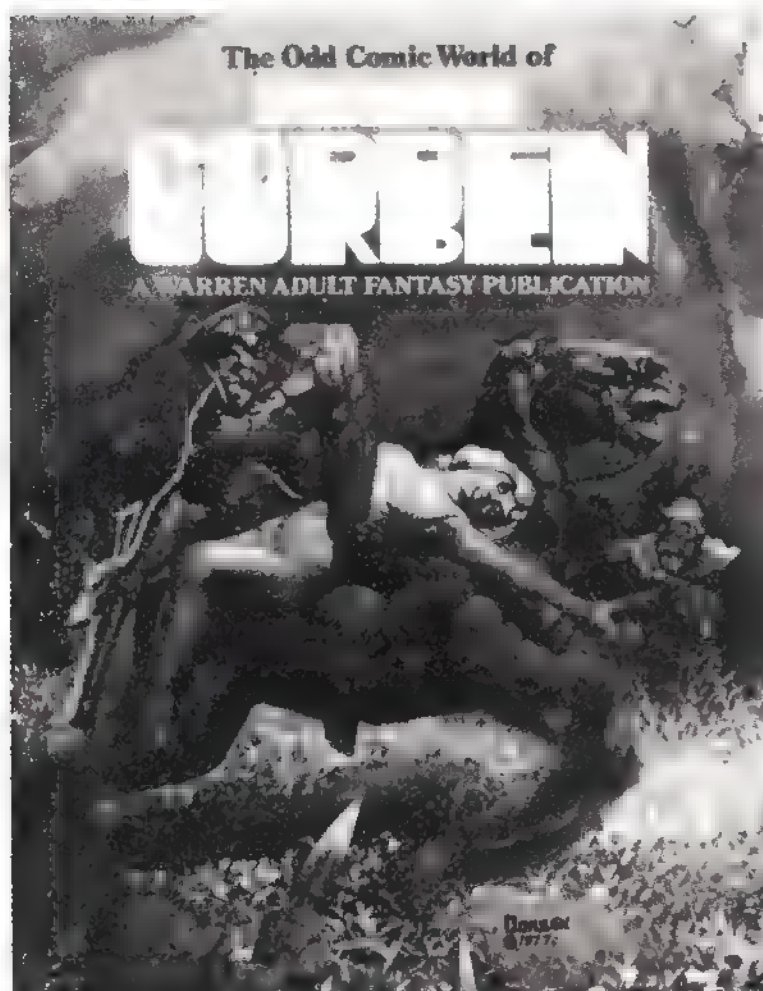


Still, who knows . . . the time may come again when we team up with Kayo Komodo and the Strikers of Brutish Behinds . . .



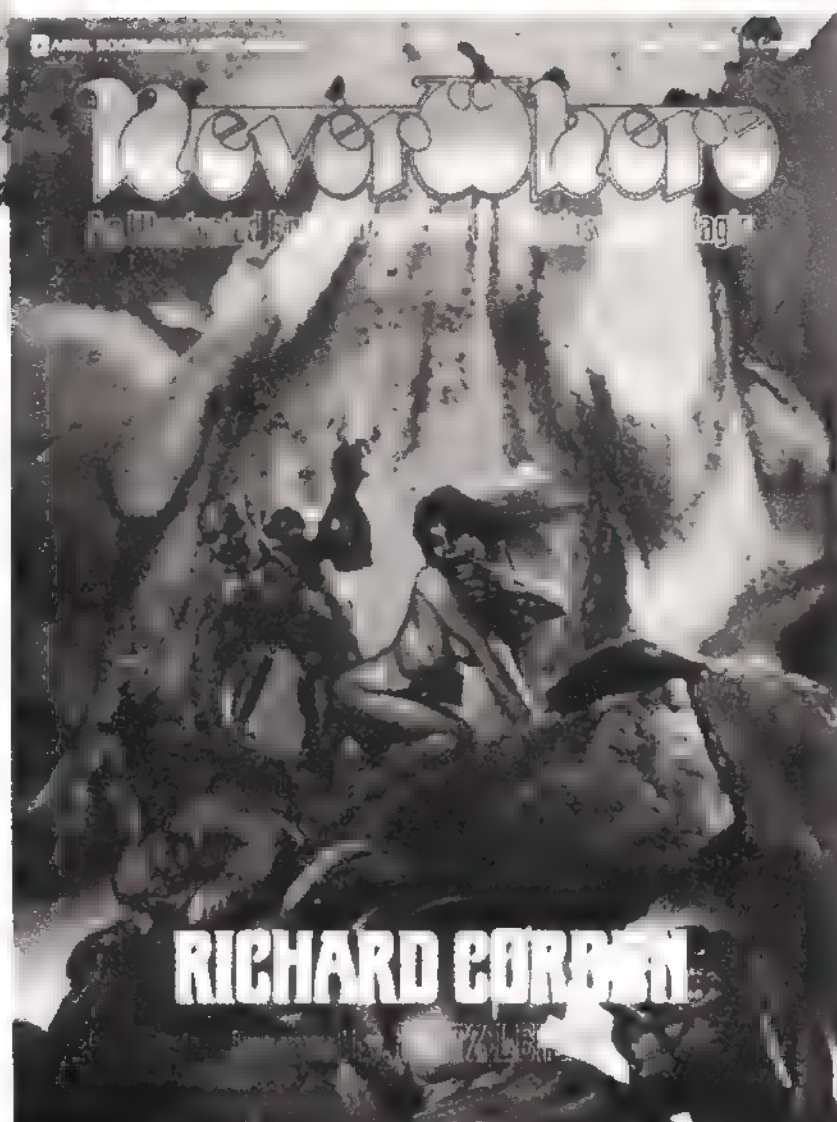
. . . But I wouldn't count on it!

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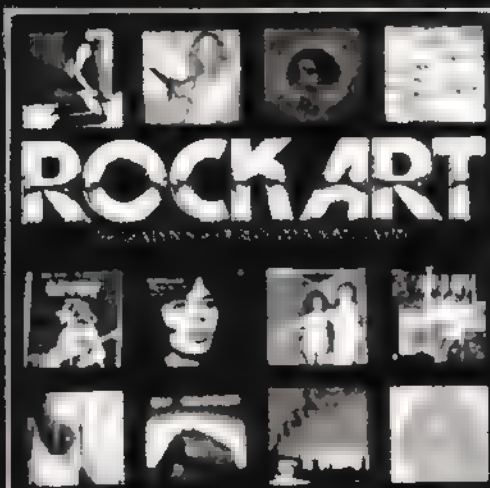
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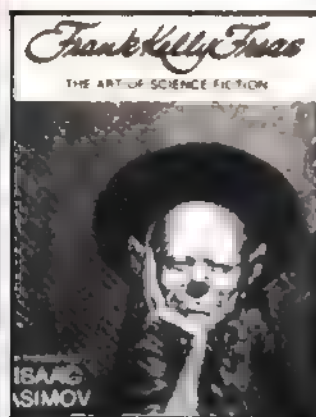
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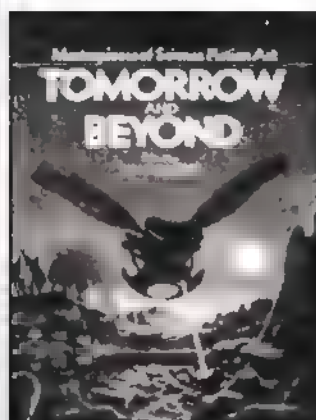
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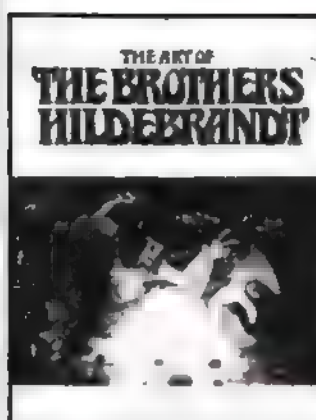
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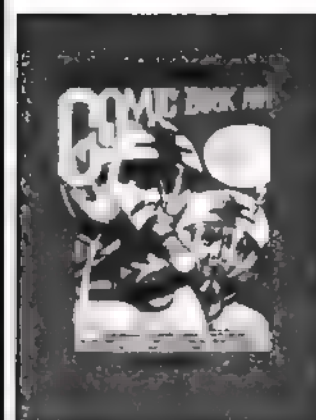
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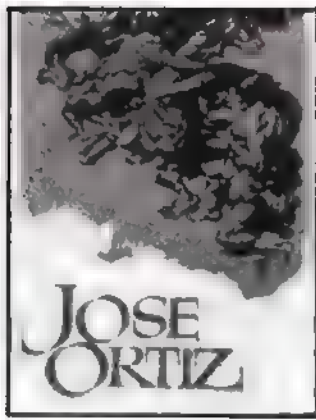
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A dying man's scream echoes off the plasticene walls of North Am's glorious three-mile high Mobius city. It is the final sound the poor man's wife will ever hear him utter, and an irreverent, thoughtless way to say ... goodbye!

Omigod! He jumped! That futz-brained fool actually jumped!

Not be concerned, Mrs. Dillamondhart! Noble wife has no leason to be distlaught!

Y-You know my name! But ... how?!

Arrow me introduce this rowrly cur. Am Hemrock Moto, certified pubric detective! I berieve noble husbland not dead! Can offer illefutuble ploof when tumbring body finary hits bottom ... three minutes fion now!

An incredulous throng of humans and wilcat striking robots strains closer to hear the incredible Mr. Moto's strange pronouncement! Is this the grim jest of a hebephrenic schitzo-paranoid? A clever ruse of that top-rated three-dee teevee show "Candid Hologram"? Or is it something far more sinister. Match wits with the emotionless Mr. Moto as he unravels the tangled clues of ...

But first, madame, need know when your husbland started acting, ... stlange

Here's your soylent sausage, hon!

Thanks, sugarnums! Hmmm ... interesting articles in this morning's rap-sheet.

Plus-blobs from Uranus, eh? Heh! Heh! That is interesting news!

Stlange? Oh ... strange! It ... it was this morning ... at breakfast!

"Cranfranz was scanning the morning data sheet when he grunted something about Plus-blobs from another world. Suddenly, he jumped up from the breakfast table, and rushed off without hardly touching his food. ...!"

"He returned shortly before lunch wearing his Sunday best! He ... he never said a word. He just winked at me once, flashed a disgusting slut-eating grin ... then stepped off the hiwalk into thin air!"

Thoughtfully, the slanty-eyed sleuth slowly nods and mutters. "Ah so, just as I thought!" And the milling crowd of picketing workbots and humans alike gasp at Mr. Moto's brilliant deductive reasoning!

The SCHMOO CONNECTION

The curious crowd of man and machine follows the indomitable detective to the nearest drop descent tube. . . !

Ret's take
dawner . . . see
Miister Diamordhart's
sowcarred remains! By way . .
not suppose noble husbland
fought in Gleast Ulanian
Wars?

Gaspl! He . . .
He did . . . ! But
that was over twenty
years ago! How
could you have
known?!

Erementary,
my good
worman!

Choke!

Aahh!

Gagge!

Jesus
shit-fucking Christ
What a schummy
mess . . . !

Please note
gleamish hue of
schlurp form's
scattered
anatomy!

Plesume
glops of pus-cored
goo not possibry
come from noble
husbland. . . !

Th-That's . . .
Barf! Heave!
. . . r-right!

. . . Which
concrusivry ploves
ancient Oriental
theoly that dead thing
someone or slomething
erse!

Gaaaaakk!

When done
retchling, noble
wife may kindry
forrow this meager worm

Flind noble
husbland slafe
and slound!

Knowing old
sordiers' ratent
phirandeling reachery,
this rowry cesspool worm
is certain Miister
Diamordhart enjoying serf
immeasulabry.

The rapidly swelling crowd mo-
nopolizes the upper and downer
tubes before finally taking a null-
grav moving belt parkway . . to
only Mr. Moto knows where!

And . . . as word of the mysterious death spreads, the surging mob in Mr. Moto's wake swells from dozens . . . to hundreds . . . to thousands!

Destination just ahead . . .

... Mobius City Intelsoror lockport!

Humble srime detective has deduced, madame, that this where husband hored up! Ret's go insiride . . .

W-Why are we stopping by this gigantic warehouse? And . . . And what does this strange sign mean? "Schmoo Imports?"

... where Mister Dliamondhart . . . froating contentedly on underrating bed of pursating mammals!

Cranfranz!!

Prease . . . arrow this humble drog exprain! Obvrious, noble husbland, rike other G.I.'s sent to Ulanus duling Gleast Wlars, became addicted to Ulanian pras-brobs!

Pras-brobs?

I think he means Plas-blobs!

Semi-interrigent ptoetan brobs can change shape into whratever rittle hearts desire. And what honolable brobs desire most is making humans hlappy by giving fleely of humble priable bodies . . . just rike legendary Schmooos of one-time flamous American comic stlip.

Unfortunatery, due to qualantime lestictions . . . not to mention intensive plessure by pubric porno and frast frood robbies . . . Pras-brobs banned flom Earth until lecentry . . . when Conglessmen sent to Ulanus got brooked on them!

Hleretofrore, onry G.I.'s aware of Pras-brobs existence . . . and their rimitress caprcity for inducing sexual exstracy!

Flurthermore . . . honolable brobs make great epiculian deright, too!

Yum! It does smell good! But getting back to my husband, if he's not dead then . . . then it had to be a Plas-blob who perished in his place . . . right?

Exactry! They do annything to give humble Earth dogs preasure!

A-Anything?!

If these Schmoos
do all the things you
claim . . . I can understand
why Cranfranz went to such
extremes to sneak off!
Plas-blobs can satisfy
his needs much
better than
I ever could!

You've put
my mind at ease, Mr. Moto! How
can I ever repay you?

This rowry excitement
happy to be of
service.

Not onry is
this humble capitalist dog plat-
time pubric detective . . .

. . . but this rowry our also
dury-ricensed full-time schmoo importer!
Flee publicity of honorable
husband's escapades
payment enough.

Yes . . . and . . .
any . . . length . . . as
well?

Collect!

Hey, mister,
y'said them
critters can take
on any shape!
How about a
38-26-36?

Hot diggity!
wrap me up a
dozen!

Bletter fly up
another batch, Kato!
Honorable deemng murititudes
working up one herr of an
appetite!

Yeehaaa!
I want one, too!

Mine!
Mine!

Gimme a fat one
with jalamas like
basketballs!

Save one
for me!

Gangway!

Whoopee!

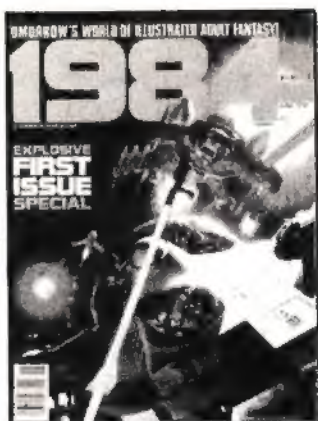
I want
mine hung
like a
sausage.

Ahem!
Care to split a Schmoos
with me, my dear?

Tee Hee!
We don't even know
each other! But . . .
giggle . . . why
not?

I want
mine hung
like two
sausages!

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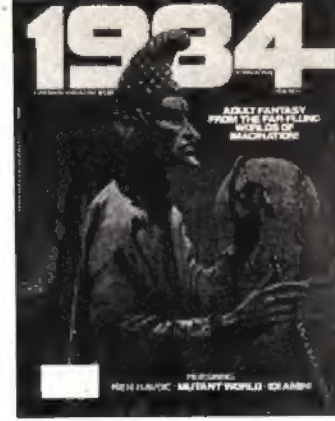
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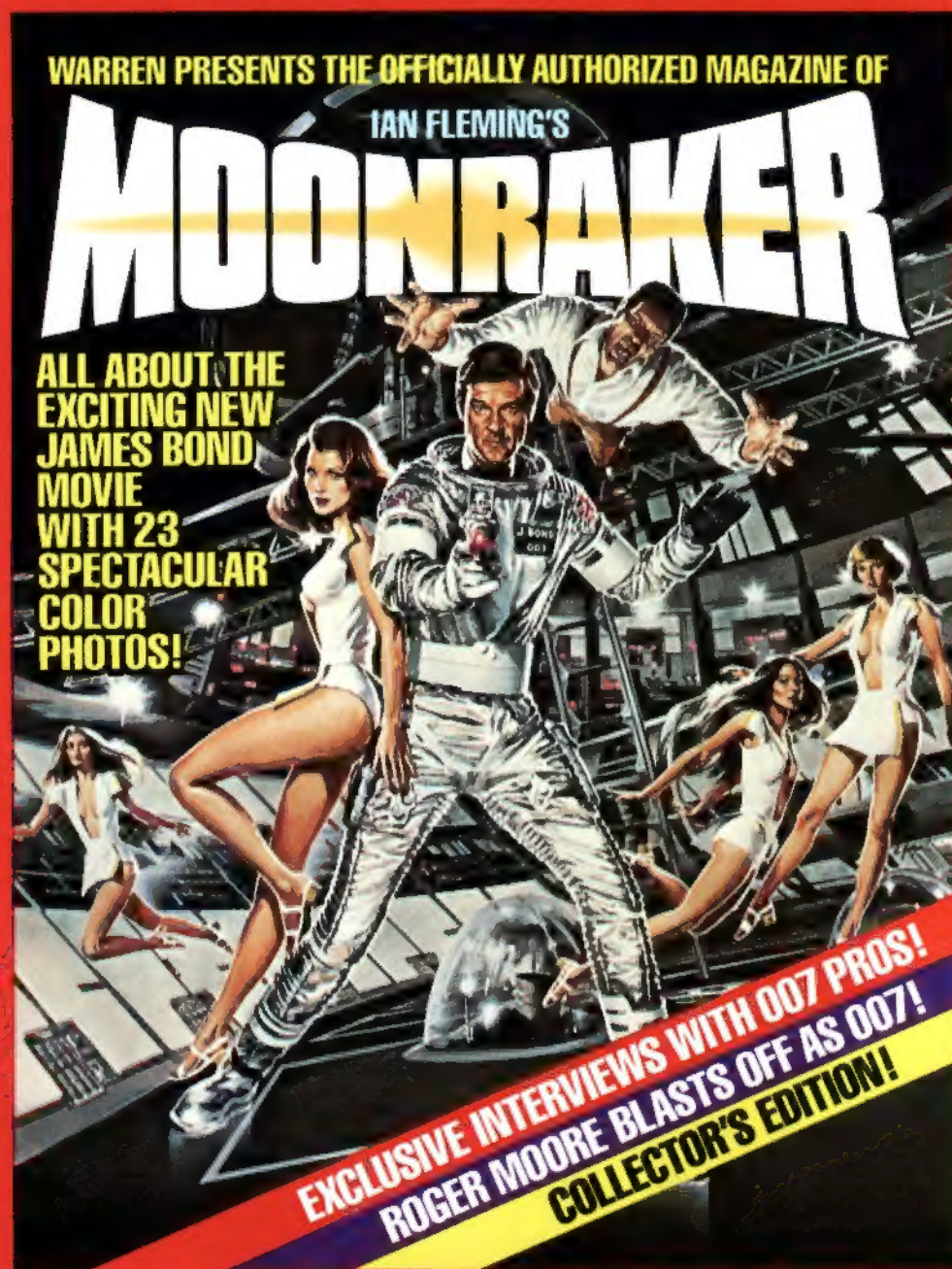


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